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Felix Janssens is an independent typographer, designer and investigator whose practice includes collaborations with artists, editors and cultural institutions. He was trained as a graphic designer at the Academy St. Joost, Breda, and worked/researched at the Jan van Eyck Akademie, Maastricht. In 1991, he founded the Sober Thinking Society (Sober denken genootschap). Since 1994 he has been a consultant with the Office for (Tele)communication, historicity and mobility.

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smietherland, 22 down: lost at C, without you on my dial (22)

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Kevin Mount edits and designs publications for Dartington Social Research Unit (a department of the University of Bristol). He was a student of painting and printmaking in the early 1970s, a newspaper journalist for twelve years and has been working with dtp systems since 1988.

Louise Sandhaus received her MFA from California Institute of the Arts after spending years as a print-based designer in Boston. Currently she can be found haunting the hallowed halls of the Jan van Eyck Akademie, Maastricht, where she recently produced the symposium "101: The Future of Design Education in the Context of Computer-Based Media." Her other unearthly endeavors include the design of *Errant Bodies* and a CD-ROM for and about Total Design.

Brian Schorn, a graduate of Cranbrook Academy of Art, teaches design at Eastern Michigan University. Strabismus, his first book of poetry, was recently published by Burning Deck Press. His poetry will also appear in the collection Rivets: Nine Postmodern Dialogues from Detroit, a collaboration of artists and writers edited by Chris Pysh. Other writings have appeared in literary journals, including *O.blek, Cyanosis, Long News in the Short Century, Caliban,* and *The Impercipient.* His design work has appeared in *Emigre, Eye, Ray Gun, New Typographics* and is forthcoming in *Typography Now 2,* edited by Rick Poynor.

andrew slatter, 23 across: polished craft here with good danish (27)

Photos credits: Susan Burdick: cover flap, inside front cover, page 1, 3, 32-33, back cover. Anne Burdick: front cover (concept and cover model: Andrew Blauvelt.)

abstract: **The Cyclic History of the Line**

Brian Schorn's "The Cyclic History of the Line" is a creative essay that loosely introduces the Oulipo (OUvroir LIttérature POtentielle) and some of its primary concerns. The essay appears on the final pages of this issue in a format designed by Simon Letherland and Andrew Slatter, both recent graduates of Ravensbourne. This abstract, written by Brian, is here to provide a bit of background for readers unfamiliar with the interesting work of the Oulipo. "The Cyclic History of the Line" was previously published in *Cyanosis #2* where it appeared in a different layout.

Ouvroir Littérature Potentielle translates into "workshop of potential literature." Only a select number of writers, mathematicians, professors and computer programmers have been permitted to partake in the activities of the OULIPO, which began in Paris in the early 1960s. These members, once selected, are members for life. Harry Mathews, a poet and novelist, is the only American. The workshop was led by two men: François Le Lionnais and Raymond Queneau. Queaneau defined the OULIPO as "the search for new forms and structures that may be used by writers in any way they see fit." The goal of the OULIPO is to discover these new structures and support them with a few examples of each. The two directions of production for the OULIPO are anoulipism (analytic) and synthoulipism (synthetic). The analytic approach is concerned with identification and recuperation of older forms of writing, for example, the sonnet; and the synthetic approach is concerned with the elaboration of new forms.

The text that prompted the organization of the OULIPO was a book by Raymond Queneau entitled *Cent Mille Millards de poémes* (One Hundred Thousand Billion Poems). This book consists of ten sonnets (analytic) which are arranged in a new, combinatory form (synthetic). The title is arrived upon from this exponential value: 10^{14}. The number ten corresponds to the number of sonnets in the book, and the number fourteen corresponds to the number of lines in a sonnet. Formally, the book consists of ten pages. Each page is sliced into fourteen strips, each strip is a line of the sonnet which can be turned like a page. Thus new sonnets can be formed, making the title's exponential value 10^{14} possible. To fully understand the magnitude of the number, consider this: If one were to read one sonnet per minute, eight hours a day, two-hundred days a year, it would take a million centuries to finish the text. Another example: This text contains a far greater sum than everything the human race has written since the invention of writing. The important point to be made here, and the crux of Oulipian thought, lies in the pool where literature is in a state of *potential*.

La disparition (The Disappearance) by George Perec is a text that addresses another important topic: constraint. *La disparition* is a 300 page detective novel written without ever using the lettter *e*, and to top it off, the book is about a detective looking for the letter *e*. The Oulipians believe in the inherent nature of constraint within literature. In other words, literature itself is nothing but a series of constraints. This constraint should not be looked upon as a means but as a principle. In the first OULIPO Manifesto, François Le Lionnais states, "Every literary work begins with inspiration which must accomodate a series of constraints."

At the center of Oulipian poetics is an essential analogy between mathematics and literature, both can be explored through the application of structures. This is why many of the members are scientists, mathematicians, and computer prgrammers. The writing itself is not nearly as important as the creation of the structures that constrain it.

A few Principles

of Typography

context   aesthetics   ethics

felix
janssens

I The book should not be considered only as a forum for distributing knowledge, for collective reading or as an expression of democracy; it must also
2-1 be seen as a →representation of authority, private ownership and capital.

With the rise of civil society in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a corresponding consciousness was embedded in the representation of individual power and capital.

The humanist typographic principles developed during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries – still the basis for current book typography – reveal a tight link between (humanist) →mo-
2-IV rality and aesthetics.

Respect for reader, author, and the text: the typographer's subservient position.

II Civil society has transformed into a society governed by corporate-capital, which goes beyond the dialectics of private-public.

Centralized governments and nation-states are losing power and are being replaced by economic zones. The representation of corporate-capital has only pseudo-civic dimensions, if any, in terms of responsibility and social concern (see, for example, shopping plazas in office towers). In this changed reality, the basic layout principles of the book remain unaltered.

III The physical act of reading hasn't changed, the context in which one reads has. There is an increase and intensification of information streams (electronic media, printed media, urban visual influx) that penetrate the mind.

The simultaneity of reading different "texts" from different origins in different media changes the process of making associations, connections and

breaks and has changed the activity of
reading itself (→discontinuity). 3-VIII
Reading has become more complex: intertextuality, repetition, condensation.

The macro-cosmos is the social and IV
political environment (→context)
in which the book operates. The 3-V
macro-cosmos is duplicated in the micro-cosmos of the book.

The particular context in which the book fulfills its role (and the cultural and mass media conditions of that context as such) should be transcribed to the structure and aesthetics of the book (micro-cosmos).

note: Does the book belong to the domain of the specific subject matter, book design and typography, or to the publishing institution? (→instru- 3-I
mental design)

Fundamental changes in book design V
are only possible when the conditions of production change. The boundaries of the designer's profession, along with those of the editor's and the publisher's, are no longer clearly and strictly determined.

Integrated editorial, strategic and design decisions are required because of these overlapping activities, and (as a consequence of, or are made possible by?) the new means of textual production and pre-press processes.

New (electronic) media (→stability 6
vs. instability) won't replace the 2-VI
book. The book won't become obsolete. Its position, though, will be redefined in relation to all kinds of new media.

Is "new media" an expression of a new era or is it the new era's very essence? How should the book relate to this, if one could speak of a new era?
(→simultaneous reading) 1-III

I Book design, like architecture, is a representational art form. In addition to the pragmatic function of its construction (*machine à lire* – Paul Valéry), book design finds its *raison d'être* in its particular context.

The function of the book as a device for reading is a constant factor. → T y -

1-I pographic principles and typographic history have been developed to function as universal (in fact, modern) guidelines. But the context and the book's role within that context constantly change. Functionality should be tied to the context in which a book operates (from standardized to customized). Then, typographic principles will no longer operate as aesthetic-conceptual principles; they will function as recognized ergonomic and organizational guidelines.

II Page numbers, headlines, half-titles, title pages, tables of contents, etc. appear to be ontological parts of the book, but are in fact historical inventions. They are either navigation tools or else functional devices, developed in an early modern environment for production, sale, reading or archiving. Such conventions are neither fixed nor inextricable.

Redefinitions of these functional elements, or solutions that lead to new editorial structures and reading, correlate to a changing environment.

III No deconstruction without reconstruction.

IV The inextricable entanglement of aesthetics, meaning, content and context makes every aesthetic decision a moral one. (Form *is* meaning, *meaning* has *form*).

V The invisible link between form and meaning (syntactic-semantic) has fal-

len apart. The natural referent has lost its credibility. The referent is instead determined by the specific context. A new visible but temporary link between → f o r m a n d m e a n i n g has   2-IV come into existence.

Stability vs. instability. The new un-   VI stable typeface attracts the eye, but stands in opposition to the printed – stable – text. Some of the new typefaces are therefore unsuitable for book typography.

By definition, printing is about the fixation and stabilization of content, whereas, current design seems not to be. The perpetual longing for the new and for difference is fundamentally an economically defined phenomenon (action, reaction). But what does it have to do with book design?
(→ i n s t r u m e n t a l d e s i g n)   3-I

One can think of a book as a → t r a n -   VII
s c r i p t i o n of (sometimes incommen-   1-IV
surable) mass-media, historical and cultural conditions, densely layered in such a way that visible residues of their origins remain (→ m a c r o / m i c r o -   1-IV, 3-V
c o s m o s), rather than an amorphous translation of such conditions into an editorial-aesthetic concept (modern rhetoric).

Fitting and obscuring: The precise   VIII
relationship between → f o r m a n d   2-IV
c o n t e n t, the design of the content and the content itself. When the design obscures the content, the content never sees the light of day!

On the other hand, when the design exactly fits with the content, one could speak of a seamless connection between form and content. They become one, while they can be distinguished (read) as separate.   3-V
(→ c o n t e x t d e f i n i t i o n)

I Instrumental design and inherent design: The publisher's commercial and strategic interests, the author's ambition and the designer's ambition belong to the instrumental. The content, the design of the content and the object itself belong to the inherent.

2 I (→book design)
Instrumental design is only concerned with the degree of communicative effectiveness, regardless of what it communicates. It relegates the qualities of the book, as such, to the background: the physicality of the object, the meaning of the content and the design. Inherent design, on the other hand, places notions such as "inherent quality," "autonomy" and "respect" at the center of its argument.
This is a question of what book design is about. Is it a mode of visual communication or of monumental art? Or is it both to different degrees?

2 IV (→entanglement of ethics and aesthetics)

II Ecological ethics could be applied to (book) design in such a way that they represent an open, non-instrumental and non-governing attitude towards the content and the means of which the designer makes use – as generally our relationship to the other, to artifacts and to nature can be imagined in an equal, non-appropriative, open relationship. One has to create a space

2 VIII (→seamless connection) between the text and the reader by means of an open aesthetics, for the sake of the claim on "autonomy" and "respect" for both text and reader.

III
2 I The book is a medium, a tool (→*machine à lire*) and an object.
When does the design of a book render it closed and untouchable – commodified, fetishized?

IV The quality of an argument is more important than the mere presence of an argument. It is about the precision with which meaning is generated.

V To a certain extent, social, cultural and mass media conditions are objectively perceivable. Selecting and defining the criteria that determine the context of
1 IV the book (→trancription), as is done by the designer and the editor, is
1 IV a subjective activity. (→microcosmos) The definition of the context represents a moral position.

VI "... critical regionalism continues to seek a certain deeper historic logic in the past of this [historical teleology] system, if not its future: a rearguard retains overtones of a collective resistance, and not the anarchy of trans-
2 VI avant-garde pluralism (→longing for the new) that characterizes many of postmodern ideologies of Difference as such..." —*Frederic Jameson*

VII Can the book be a compilation of pages or sections that are different in kind?
3-VIII The medium limits the →discontinuity because of its fixed construction, its unifying grid and its repeating page layout. The paradox of the word "pluralism": singular in itself, it is a unifying category of different – sometimes irreconcilable – entities. But can't one imagine a book containing different parts from different origins translated to different grids and layouts? (Books with incoherent contents are common, but why are they still in coherent forms?)

VIII Linearity vs. discontinuity. (→sta-
2-VI bility vs. instability) The totality of the book must be coherent in meaning. Instead of emphasizing difference, one should provide the preconditions necessary to make meaningful connections between the different parts. Instead of thinking in terms of breaks and difference, one should think in terms of meaningful joints.

text: anne bush   design: russ bestley

criticism and the politics of

The irony of writing criticism is that one must ultimately challenge one's own convictions to remain critical. As a result, the critic must be both inside and outside of her discipline. The first is a natural position; the second a cultural one. To be inside a discipline is to engage in criticism from a collective position, to subscribe to its conventions and traditions. Such criticism supports cohesiveness, as it frames judgement in terms of right and wrong, good and bad. It nurtures loyalty and adherence to disciplinary rhetoric. The cultural critic, Edward Said, has described this interior criticism as "filial," a position so natural that it is akin to being born into it.[1] Yet to embrace only this "natural" criticism is problematic, since true self-reflection requires distance from one's habits and beliefs. "Cultural" criticism provides this external view. In Said's terms, cultural criticism is "affilial" and based on parameters beyond the prescriptions of a discipline. As a contextual perspective, it does not support conventions, but analyzes the intersections between conventions and other disciplines and events. It places the object of its criticism "in the world." It is this cultural criticism, however, that is frequently eliminated from professional discussions of graphic design.

In a recent dialogue with Michael Rock on the merits of both natural and cultural criticism to graphic design, Rick Poynor – editor of *Eye* magazine – notes that criticism in the trade magazines needs to address a "broad professional audience." To do this, it needs to be both relevant and accessible to practitioners. Poynor suggests a "critical journalism" as the optimal approach for this writing since it has "a strong sense of the particular and uses a close, pragmatic acquaintance with the realities of production to ask more down-to-earth questions about individuals and bodies of work."[2] It is the antithesis of "academic," or cultural, criticism, an approach that he admits has value, but only for limited audiences. According to Poynor, academic criticism employs an "uncompromising form of analysis" that appeals only to designers who are "given to a particular type of reflection." His distinction is a dangerous one.

To champion an interior critique of graphic design in commercial publications is to continue the tradition of celebratory as opposed to investigatory discourse within the profession. It promotes agreement rather than analysis as celebratory discourse works to make invisible the actual affiliations between the world and the graphic design profession.[3] The benefits for this are clear. Representing the profession as a consensual body, composed of practitioners who subscribe to objective dialogue and believe in the merits of a pragmatically-centered discourse, serves industry by masking the

1. Said, Edward, The Text, The World, The Critic (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983)

2. Poynor, Rick, 'What is This Thing Called Graphic Design Criticism?' *Eye* 16, 1995, pp.56–59

3. Said, Edward, 'Opponents, Audiences, Constituencies and Community', in Hal Foster, ed. The Anti-Aesthetic (Post Townsend: Bay Press, 1983), p. 128

absence

economic agendas of production. It creates the illusion that the graphic design profession does not need to question its assumptions. Yet the extent to which this "making invisible" has depoliticized the practice of design is more than a bit disconcerting. In a telling moment, Poynor states:

Theory's conclusions will in some cases be profoundly opposed to certain forms of design activity. How meaningful or relevant is the unmasking of ideologi- cal operations going to be to the designer making a successful career in supermarket packaging, annual reports for Fortune 500 companies, or the world of glossy magazines? Not everyone shares the leftist political position that underpins the challenge these theories make to design.[4]

This is exactly the point. Professional identity depends upon the mutual acceptance of disciplinary conventions. It is a collective belief. The paradox of critical analysis, however, is that its role is to challenge this cohesiveness, to lay bare ideological bias. As a form of investigation, it is contradiction, not confirmation. Thus, it is self-serving to define the relevance of a critical approach by the extent to which its conclusions coincide with professional conventions. I would argue that promoting an exclusively interior or "professional" criticism in the non-academic design press works to trivialize both criticism and the profession itself. By eschewing contextual dialogue, such criticism does not promote analysis but stifles it. It creates an analytical void, an imbalance between internal assumptions and the external conditions that create and influence them. Interestingly enough, the absence of this contextual perspective is rooted in Enlightenment notions of the public sphere and the very concept of what constituted critical exchange.

Criticism as Conversation

The view of criticism as a dialogue within a consensual public body can be traced back to the intersection of the critic and the public sphere during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. As outlined by Jürgen Habermas in The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere, criticism was a reaction to aristocratic rule and emerged as a "theater of exchange" within a discursive public arena.[5] Supported by the technological possibilities of an industrialized printing trade, criticism was a kind of democratic dialogue, published in periodicals and mediated by discussion in public houses. Unlike contemporary criticism that is specific to the issues of a discipline, criticism at the beginning of the industrial revolution was based on popular consensus and addressed the cultural and social questions of the day. According to Habermas, the middle class viewed the critic as more conductor than composer, a facilitator and co-discourser in a social dialogue based on common sense and rational judgement. Seen in this way, criticism was part and parcel of an enlightened concept of society, a view that suspended class divisions in a purported attempt to keep discourse open and accessible to "every man."[6] This attempt, of course, was futile.

In as much as criticism became a utopian dialogue, it was inextricable from its own ideology and exclusions. Seeking to displace the aristocracy, the bourgeoisie was solidifying its own power base, which contained some of the same economic motivations that, originally, it had vowed to oppose. As a result, the democratic rationale of an open public dialogue was tainted by the autocratic echoes of a ruling voice, an enunciation that was white, male and privileged. By focusing on common sense as the measure by which rational argument was supported, the middle class excluded all who did not subscribe to their particular experiences and values including women, peasant groups and the working class. This meant that the public sphere conceived by Habermas was an abstraction, a hegemonic center from which the economic interests of the industrial elite were instituted under the guise of popular consent.[7] As these private interests grew, the utopian ideal of an open and democratic public exchange was superseded by an increasingly
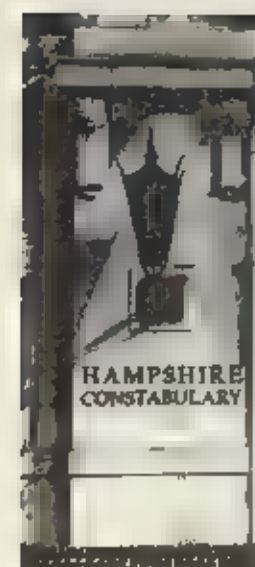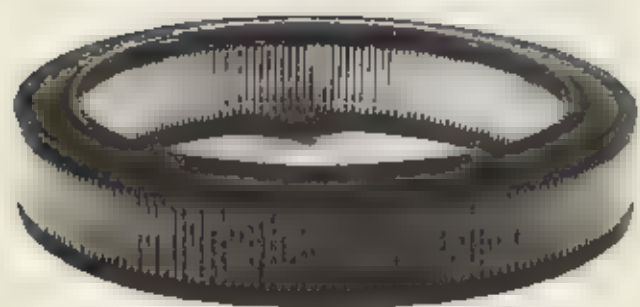
4. Poynor, p. 57–58.

5. Habermas, Jürgen, The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society, trans. Thomas Burger with Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989)

6. Fraser, Nancy, 'Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy,' in Bruce Robbins, ed. The Phantom Public Sphere (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993). pp.1–9.

7 Ibid, p.11–19.
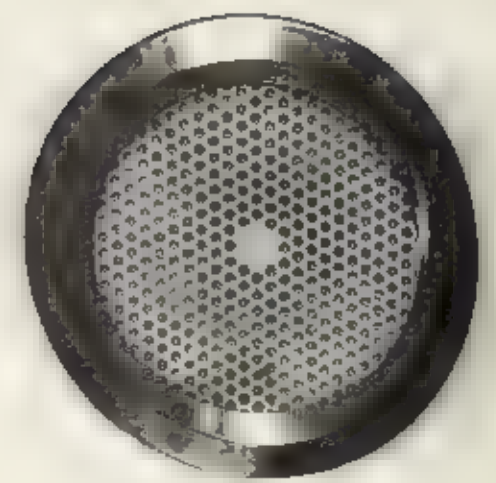
specialized and interior critique, one supported by the capitalist division of labor and the rise of the specialized professional.

Criticism as Mediation

By the end of the eighteenth century, industrialization had produced a working class that would challenge the bourgeoisie through capitalist production and competition. Critical dialogue became a commodity, a product that could be imitated and sold to an increasingly diversified marketplace. With these changes came the initiation of new journals and the employment of the flamboyant literary "hack," a writer whose job it was to construct criticism in a form that aspired to conceptions of good taste, a form that the public would buy. In response, the bourgeois critic retreated. Preferring to distance himself from the commodity-driven discourse of the market, the middle-class intellectual employed "thicker" language and the isolated persona of the knowing sage,[3] separating himself from public opinion in the process. The point was to associate "true" critical language with a particular expertise, endowing the critic with prestige and power through professional distance. Ironically, it would be precisely this aura of expertise that would serve to reunite the critic and the public, as society would turn to the specialized analysis of the critic to assuage their fears of a dehumanized future.

Paradoxically, industrial "progress" caused both anticipation and apprehension in the capitalist middle class. Although they were invigorated by the economic prosperity that mass production provided, they were uncertain about how to negotiate the social changes that accompanied this new wealth. Capitalist society needed guidance, someone who could clarify the relationship between technological advances and the human condition. The bourgeois critic answered this call. As a mediator between the productive and consumptive factions of society, the critic served both public and private interests. The goal was to quell the fears brought about by industrial change, to demystify production and consumption. This mediation, of course, was a myth. Criticism would always be subjective, influenced by the economic agenda of the producing elite, rendering the discoursing public sphere a mere phantom, a body constructed and manipulated by private interests.[1] As a response to this dilemma, criticism turned inward. In an effort to maintain their legitimacy, critics abandoned public/private mediation for empirical analysis, believing that "facts" provided the last bastion of "true," objective discourse.

Criticism as Explanation

Advocating factual description and logical method, critical evaluation in the nineteenth century not only mirrored empirical philosophy of the same period, but gestured toward the object-centered criticism that would dominate the first part of the twentieth century. By embracing the objectivity associated with science, it created the illusion that social and cultural changes could be rationally articulated and impartially evaluated. Preferring to distance itself from ambiguities inherent in contextual evaluations, critical dialogue qualified its object as pure, isolated and unique, paralleling a type of segregation begun by industrial labor divisions and the birth of the professions. The emphasis shifted to the singularity of criticism's object; it's essential and thus untainted attributes.

An example of this empirical discourse can be seen in the development of the New Criticism in the 1920s. Focusing on literature, the New Criticism stressed the particularity of the literary object, the ways in which its language differed from other types of language. Any attention that had previously been paid to the reader (or the public) was now centered on the text as an independent, autonomous entity. This text became the focus of detailed structural analysis, detached from the external conditions of its creation and reception.

Criticism, like the literary work, was privileged. Yet this circumscription only served to make the discipline of literary production parochial and incapable of examining the real forces that affected
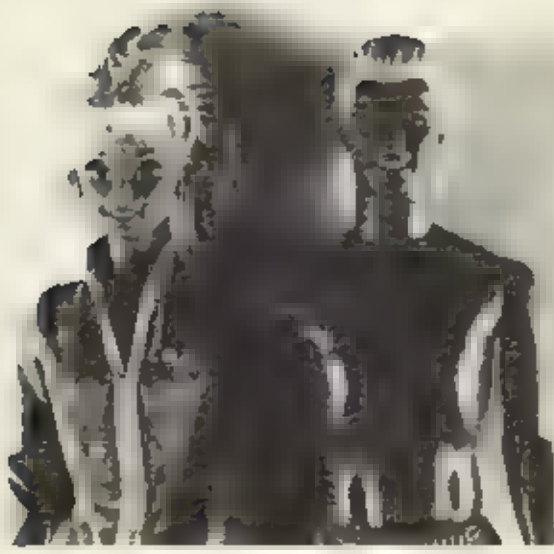
its existence. Ironically, it was the hard sciences, the disciplines
that had provided the models for empirical investigation that literary
criticism had adopted, who first realized the futility of methodical,
objective criticism. As Elizabeth Bruss states:

The belief that significant results could be achieved
through methodology and technique alone gradually
gave way to a wary recognition that there must be
some preliminary grounds for using one method
rather than another, and that, in the absence of an
explicit theory the presuppositions and consequences
that no method can avoid will continue covertly,
untested and unchecked.[10]

In the years following the Second World War, the presuppositions
that fueled the New Criticism would become increasingly difficult to
support. There was no essentialist nature to literary language, no
objective framework that critical discourse could uncover that was
not linked in some way to the critic's own voice and assumptions.
In the end, the isolated structural reading of a text only revealed
another form of internal dialogue, distanced and neutralized by its
failure to gain a perspective on its own ideological biases. The
dogma of this self-quotation was eventually transformed by the
final dismissal of cultural consensus that accompanied the
skepticism of the 1960s.

Criticism as Investigation

The cultural and social upheaval of the 1960s changed the role of
critical discourse forever. Wary of institutions that were responsible
for creating and disseminating knowledge, many questioned the
motivating assumptions behind institutional practices. Demographic
changes meant that school populations were heterogeneous, that
teachers could no longer assume that entering students would share
common knowledge and experiences. This was compounded by a
growing distrust in human control over industry and the environment.

8. Eagleton, Terry, The Function of Criticism: From The Spectator to Post
Structuralism (London: Verso, 1991), p.39.

9. Ibid, p.80.

10. Bruss, Elizabeth W, Beautiful Theories: The Spectacle of Discourse in
Contemporary Criticism (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1962),
p 15.
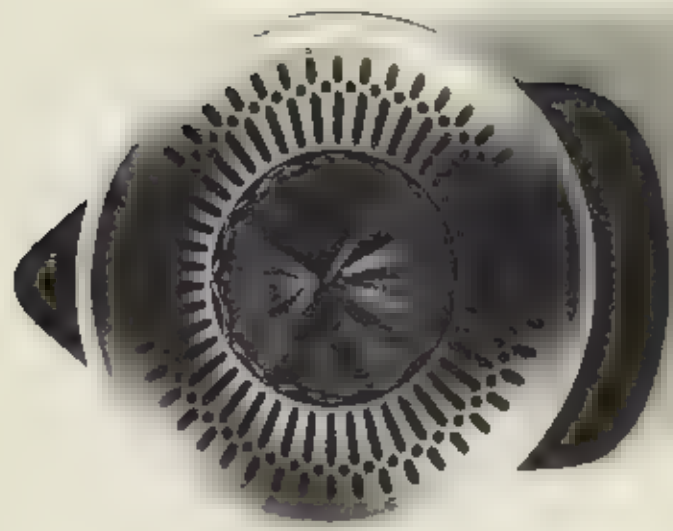
Technological and environmental decisions that were once viewed as emancipatory were now looked upon with skepticism and distrust. This anxiety was further magnified by the proliferation of mass communications and the simultaneous representation of reality as both intimate and remote.[11] For capitalist societies, the world had become a simulation. By the mid-twentieth century, the only universal, communal experience that existed was created by the media, a spectacle designed to promote private interests and to neutralize individual choice. It was a constructed reality, a (re)presentation that "constantly ingested or eradicated the objects it supposedly proffered, forcing them to hover in an unlocatable space… a supreme fiction."[12]

The reduction of reality to fiction is the modern dilemma. Evident in all aspects of contemporary life, it is this condition that has transformed both critical analysis and the objects of its study. Confronted by the myth of public consensus and the neutralization of evaluation by political economy, critical discourse in the 1960s responded by altering its language, by challenging the "comforting repetition of ideological caress."[13] Focusing less on defining commonalities and more on articulating contradictions, criticism became a location for demonstrating specific sets of problems, a "theater of interpretation" that replaced Habermas's "theater of exchange." No longer seen as benign, the instruments of critical dialogue became as important as the objects under scrutiny. They were seen as individual strategies particular to the analytic intention of the critic (e.g. supplying legitimacy to individual perspectives, unveiling the indeterminacy of meaning, disclosing unacknowledged ideologies, challenging disciplinary traditions, addressing new disciplinary needs, etc.).[14] This new perspective would change both the way in which disciplines were discussed, and ultimately, the disciplines themselves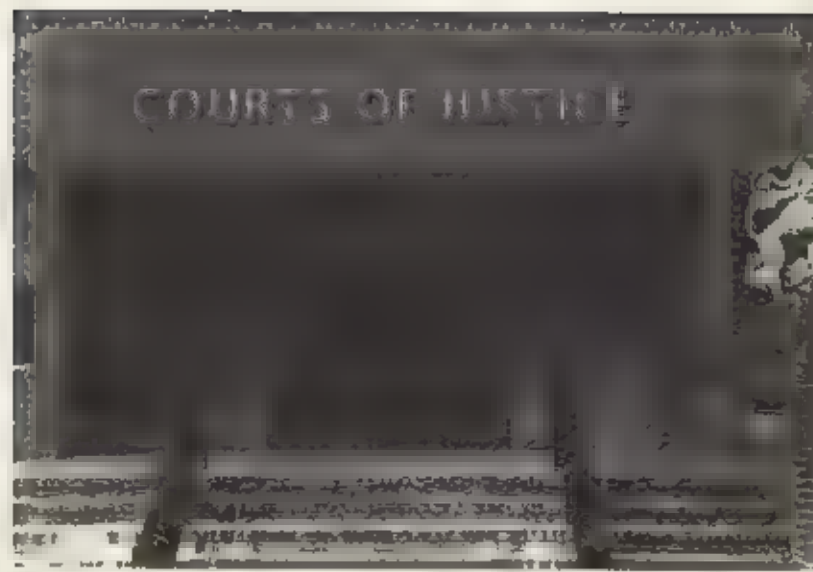. In many cases this would mean questioning the tacit core of disciplinary understanding, the rules and assumptions that defined a particular field of knowledge. These questions would prove to be emancipatory for some disciplines and threatening to others.

Akin to the textual evaluations of the New Criticism, evaluations of graphic design have avoided the contextual strategies employed by other disciplines in favor of a criticism that is professionally internal and unique to its product. Continuing to believe in the possibility of untainted judgements, the field has supported a dialogue based on graphic design's essential qualities, and on a reality shaped by its practical applications. As confirmation, this mode of criticism not only stymies analytical discourse, but reveals a disturbing separation between the act of designing and the circumstances within which this act takes place.

Adhering to notions of a universal audience, graphic design practice in the mid-twentieth century subscribed to the high modernist idea that messages could be objectively constructed. Systems and prescriptions regarding clarity and consistency dominated the field, providing methods that could be imitated and mastered. Consequently, the success or failure of a designed object was measured by whether or not it followed professional conventions concerning efficiency, legibility, and universality. Unfortunately these internal, essentialist qualities were invoked in approaches to writing criticism as well and have remained de rigueur while professional practice has continued to transform.

The belief that graphic design criticism needs to appeal to a "broad professional audience" reveals a limited view of criticism's function. By invoking utopian notions surrounding open discourse, it betrays a nostalgia for the stability of high modernist ideals and denies the possibility of ideological intervention. Harkening back to Enlightenment notions of free and consensual discussion, it homogenizes criticism by implying that dialogue can reach a balance, a position that a general disciplinary group can agree is comfortable and appropriate. Yet as history has shown, such beliefs are fallacious. Criticism in its most rigorous form is analytic contestation. Its goal is not to reinforce, but to reveal. As an interaction between inter-

nal disciplinary conditions and outside influences, it must ultimately eschew consensus to maintain its critical eye. Thus, to promote pragmatic criticism because it appeals to a professional body actually thwarts analytic introspection as it mistakenly equates relevance with accessibility.

In as much as the graphic design profession has supported internal criticism as a means for a more accessible and relevant dialogue, it has avoided the often contradictory relationship between the two: they are not intrinsically linked. Relevance indicates a meaningful relationship between an object or issue and a particular circumstance. It implies that a conjuncture is important. But it does not imply that these relationships are always easily digestible or palatable. In contrast, access does: it is about ability. To be accessible is to be capable of being understood, to be easy, to be open. In regards to graphic design criticism, however, the fact that a critique does not subscribe to a common (accessible) language is frequently the very thing that makes it relevant. Alternative realities and systems of reference not normally embraced by professional mandates are made possible by positioning critical discussions outside a particular disciplinary tradition or view. To eliminate this outside perspective is to neutralize critical debate.

By separating reflection and action, a singularly professional criticism depoliticizes graphic design. Preferring to focus on internal questions, it implies that design is only important to itself, privileged and immune, distanced from social and cultural conditions that it actually has a hand in constructing. To mature as a discipline, graphic design needs to embrace a professional critical discourse that juxtaposes internal conventions with external factors. Placing graphic design criticism in this larger milieu allows the critic to be both inside and outside of her field and to understand how disciplinary rhetoric is formed in order to prevent its reduction to prescription and ideological dogma. In the end this endows the designer with possibilities as opposed to restrictions.

It acknowledges not only what the world can learn from graphic design, but also what graphic design can learn from the world.

11 Bruss, pp.16–18.

12. Krauss, Rosalind, '1967/1987: Genealogies of Art and Theory,' in Hal Foster, ed., Dia Art Foundation: Discussions in Contemporary Culture (Seattle Bay Press, 1987), p.61.

13 Bruss, p.4.

14. Ibid. p.26

Inter-Views: Feeding Squirrels to the Nuts

BY ANNE BURDICK

Handwritten letters covered with stickers remind me of the notes I sent my best friend Barbara when she moved away in the seventh grade. So when I received one in response to the *Mouthpiece Call for Papers/Projects*, it stood out from the elaborately packaged, meticulously typeset crowd. I thought, Barbara? But the low-tech transmission was far from junior high gossip; its sophisticated content impressed this high brow graphic designer. Accompanied by an onslaught of printed ephemera, the letter trumpeted the imminent arrival of a "poster magazine" called *Feeding Squirrels to the Nuts*. In the interim, even more dispatches arrived, many confronting the politics of communication: anti-copyright diskettes, freedom of expression buttons and flyers whose day-glo propaganda promised "a new magazine consisting of ten original posters produced by a forum of international designers and critics..." I came across the key words: "democratic" and "critical writing." I couldn't wait.

Finally it arrived. A neatly packaged box of posters, each printed on different colored paper stock in two colors, addressed the general theme, "New Media and Society" with varying degrees of insight and clarity. A few of the posters were collaborations between designers and well-known writers, some of the posters' contents were appropriated or "found," while other posters were conceived by the designers alone. The voices were as diverse as the paper they were printed on.

Squirrels delivered. With an accessible, intelligent format that promotes critical exploration through writing and design, its form and content harken back to the early days of *Emigre*. While the scrawl of that initial letter asked that I focus on the project's contributors, democratic ideals and non-profit status, I couldn't keep from asking, **who's behind the curtain?**

Cactus

Packs and posters, issues 1 - 7, 1989 - 1991, screen printed.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE WRITE TO
Feeding Squirrels to the Nuts
P.O. Box 587
London SW2 4HA England

It all began with the *Cactus Network*, an international mail-art network that was started in London by Glenn Orton and Tony Credland. When they were students together at the University of Portsmouth, they were encouraged by the faculty to exchange their ideas with other students throughout Europe. Later, prompted by the cultural upheaval of the Wall coming down in Berlin and influenced by existing mail art projects, the two decided to create an outlet for graphic designers to speak their minds in an international, unedited, uncensored, non-commercial forum. In six years, they have produced 13 issues and created a network that is close to 600 strong. The project was given coverage in *Emigre* 16 and on the BBC World Service, bringing in participants from Australia, the U.S. and Africa, in addition to many Eastern and Western European countries.

Cactus works like this: Tony and Glenn send out a call for work that sets a theme (New Tongues, Fuel to Fight Fascism...) and a deadline. Participants are asked to send in as many as 120 copies of their response to the theme. Tony and Glenn create conceptually appropriate containers: silkscreening canvas, tin cans, or rubber floor mats, as necessary. They collate the variegated contents, then send a complete pack out to each of the contributors. Participation is free and open to any and all; but only those who send in work receive work back.

Maintaining the *Cactus Network* is an expensive undertaking. While it continues to be a worthwhile project for Tony and Glenn, it has been an incredible resource drain, as the two designers finance the endeavor with monies earned freelancing. In an effort to keep *Cactus* viable, Tony and Glenn decided to pool the talents of their contacts from *Cactus*, locate funding and create a poster magazine that refines the debate but retains the democracy. *Feeding Squirrels to the Nuts* represents their first foray into the "free" market, and now they are confronted with the realities of making a commercial success of a community mouthpiece.

The flat reproductions that accompany this article cannot do justice to the palpable presence of the disparate locales that are woven together in these projects, particularly *Cactus*. But the strength of *Cactus* and *Squirrels* lies not in some dreamy netherworld of aesthetic delights. It rests, instead, in the process, the network, the lofty goals and open access. In keeping with the spirit of the project, I asked for comments from many of the contributors to the first issue of *Squirrels*, via fax, e-mail, post, or phone. Oh, and I interviewed Glenn and Tony.

Barcelona

[1] On a bright cloudless morning we flew over Europe to Barcelona, a seaport in Spain, on the coast... [2] We mixed pleasure with business class, in-flight... [3] The flight emergency procedures proved to be an impressive electronic visualization of the more traditional hostess-synchronised signing... [4] In the Spanish seaport, the words we gathered were not spoken not in a tongue we understood, but in a language we have grown to love... [5] Wall-to-wall inspiration, led to day-by-day perspiration... [6] Souvenirs-a-plenty, especially a personalized Flamenco poster... [7] Travel broadens the mind and fills our carrier bag... [8] We photocopy faxed photographs of fabulous features caught on camera... [9] Tat & Whimsy abroad in a continental city of tremendous t y p o g r a p h y .

Interview with Tony Credland

AUGUST 10, 1995, 4PM RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA   9PM LONDON

Anne Burdick: *I've been going through all the work you sent me and you keep reiterating that you don't want to be recognized as the sole author or editor of all of this, that it's a group project and that it's very democratic. Do you have any problems with me doing an interview with you?*

Tony Credland: It depends on how you write it. We did an interview about *Cactus* with a magazine years ago, and we asked them not to use our names because we wanted them to write about the idea. Instead, they used our names about fifty times. It just came across wrong. I don't want to come across as though I want to be famous, because I believe in what I'm doing.

Anne: *The literature you have sent me about Cactus mentions that it was unedited and uncensored, and I guess you and Glenn have served primarily as coordinators and facilitators.*

Tony: That's what we tried to be. We tried to keep it decentralized. With each issue, we sent out a list of everyone who had joined in, hoping everyone would start contacting each other, so that everyone in the network knows everyone else is.

Anne: *In the info about Squirrels, you talk about a similar democratic approach in terms of critiquing one another's work; that you preferred to have the critiques communal rather than centralized. How did that work?*

Tony: We didn't want to just create another magazine that claimed to be different from other magazines that are not very democratic. We were determined to try it a different way. It is a lot harder to do it democratically We sent the brief out to everyone, and within three months we had to ask them all to send roughs to each other and then to crit each other, and I don't think it actually worked to

the extent that we had wanted, but I think it did to some extent. People did crit each other's work a bit. I don't know how much people changed their work as a result. It's hard for me to actually document

Anne: *What was your initial concept for Squirrels? What did you set out to achieve?*

Tony: We had a group of people and we liked what they were doing. They were sort of like us, students or people who had just left college, all talking in the same way about graphic design, but not in the same way as most graphic design magazines were talking. We couldn't relate to a lot of the stuff going on in the magazines. It wasn't the same politics as ours or it wasn't political at all. We thought that the best way to get our views out and to get these people's work seen would be to actually publish something like this.

Anne: *Which came first: the decision to make Squirrels a poster magazine, or the decision to make the theme of the first set be "New Media"?*

Tony: The poster magazine. We're going to do more issues in the future with different themes, and they'll all be poster magazines; the format and the size is what we wanted to do. The important thing was for people to see it and read it. We knew we were not going to print 10,000 copies, so we were thinking more along the lines of one copy being put up at a college somewhere and all the students reading it

Anne: *In the literature that you sent me, you discussed the difficulties that the poster magazine presents. It has to be read over time, up close and far away. It's probably the one format that has the ability to reach more than its initial reader. It's as public a forum as we've got.*

Tony: We were thinking when we came up with the theme "New Media" — three years ago, it seemed like a much more important issue, but now it seems maybe a bit odd — that maybe we should have used a more technological way to present it. But one thing we've learned from *Cactus* is that it's fine for us to be talking about disks and cd-roms and all that, but so many people we have contact with don't have any access to that sort of media. With posters, everyone has access.

Anne: *I've got a few quotes from the set that pertain to this discussion. The first is from the poster, "Information Atrophy," written by Teal-Ann Triggs and designed by Glenn Orton. Teal writes,* **"The relationship between reader and text is altered fundamentally by changes associated with the mere physicality of books and computers, objects whose physical nature affects the way textual materials are handled and presented."** *Many of the posters discuss different ways of reading and the effect of format on that. I thought it was an interesting discussion in the context of this unusual format.*

Tony: The poster magazine came about because we wanted it to be full of text — quite a lot of text — rather than just big posters, pretty pictures and things. It was a way to try to force everyone to write. Not everyone did in the end; we just asked them to. We knew this was basically going to be about graphic design for graphic designers. We didn't want it just to contain things to stick on the wall. It had to try to change people's points-of-view about graphic design. But in the end, we weren't forceful enough with the editorial content. We've always been funny on this issue, because with *Cactus* we had no editorial control. And maybe in this we should have had a bit more than we tried to. The magazine doesn't have a definite editorial stance because we allowed everyone to decide on their own text and hoped they would all come up with something similar.

Anne: *You've obviously got an interest in writing about design. Most of the graphic designers from London who I know say, "You Americans, all you want to do is talk about design and write about it; we just want to make it."*

Tony: I feel you can do both I suppose I do just make it. But then, I like to think about why I'm making it, as well

Anne: *I'm going to throw another quote at you. This one is from the poster that you designed, "New Technologies, New Debates," written by Michèle Anne Dauppe. She says,* **"The shift from a mechanical age to an electronic age has created a profound intellectual anxiety. But also an opportunity for a re-evaluation of established values in practice."** *I would consider your projects, from Cactus to Squirrels, somewhat of a re-evaluation of established values and practices.*

DESIGN: Glenn Orton [Cactus]
TEXT: Teal Triggs [Course Leader School of Graphic Design Ravensbourne College of Design and Communication]

Information Atrophy

The writing of "Information Atrophy" coincided with a point a few years ago when I was disillusioned and wary of the emerging visual postmodern landscapes of the time. In my mind, the balance between form and content of messages had been distorted, and communication thereby disrupted. In general, *Feeding Squirrels to the Nuts* provided me an opportunity to extend my ideas into a form not normally associated with "academic" writing. This presented an interesting problem: the design of the poster required the text to be enhanced and augmented by visual form. In some measure, the designers have achieved a successful balance by using some of the very elements that had concerned me. Since then, I have come to a better understanding of the contemporary visual landscape and have come to accept such complex forms and layering of information as integrated and indispensable components of appropriate communication.

TEAL TRIGGS

Tony: *Cactus's* start was very political. It comes from a left-wing point-of-view of no control. We didn't want any control over any of the points-of-view: non-censorship and non-edited, no money involved. It started just as we were finishing college, at Portsmouth The ideas behind it were developed while at college, but we didn't actually start it until we left for London. We went to a Festival of Plagiarism, up in Glasgow. It was an anti-art festival. There were all these people doing mail art and starting a world-wide art strike. That introduced me to mail art because I hadn't seen it before, even though it had been going on since the sixties, from Fluxus. But we found a lot of the work was very fine-arty, not very relevant to us. So we decided to set up our own network to concentrate on graphic design, to bring this whole political way of looking at graphic design and art to a wider audience. We wanted to bring out the politics of what you are ac-

DESIGN: Ian Noble [Head of Communication
Design University of Portsmouth]

I became involved with *Cactus* as a participating part of the chain. The network grew over a number of years to such a scale that it began to drain the resources of Tony and Glenn and to challenge their initial concept of a democratic and non-censored project.

The recent departure from earlier formats and structure came from a desire to grow the original ideas into a more mature and selective vehicle for the debates central to *Cactus*.

During this period I was invited, amongst others, to submit a text or an authored poster for an issue that concerned itself with new media. As with every *Cactus* collaboration, direction and intention was left entirely to the individual.

My own piece was an attempt to draw together various ideas debated within the department at Portsmouth. Concisely put, the poster argues that graphic design has currently become a reactive discipline that does little more with the new technologies than finesse existing prototypes.

The possibilities that this revolution affords our discipline should not be overlooked in the rush to monopolize "new markets," but should be seen as an opportunity to reappraise what we mean by graphic design and its inherent value. The new media should generate debate and investigation concerning the rationalization and representation of form that has its precedents in the relationship between the development of language and technology.

During the development of the work, most traffic was remote: telephone, fax, etc. In the latter stages when the ideas came together, I had a short meeting with Tony. At the end I handed *Cactus* one-color film artwork and as previously agreed, they made all other decisions concerning color, etc.

Most designers would agree that to lose control of a job in its latter stages is difficult. Since I was relatively "local," and collaboration with more distant partners/contributors was less reliable, we agreed that my work would be a "Wild Card" and would be printed on a stock and in a color that complemented the set.

IAN NOBLE

TECHNOWLEDGE

Discourse surrounding the relationship between Graphic Design and new media has allowed the issue of technology to obscure the real cultural role graphic design has to play in the 'New Europe and beyond.

+The increasing role of interactive media, presents those concerned with the organisation and conveyance of information and ideas with a new agenda.

+Digital technology manifested in part, by 'information highways' and 'Smart TV' is already accelerating the collapse of cultural/national identities and bringing us closer to an imagined homogenised European culture. The technology that empowers this change dictates an approach from design that is firmly embedded in the debate of both cultural and technical issues.

+Historically, technological development has been concomitant with the rationalisation of typographic form and, perhaps, more importantly the application of language reform. It would seem logical that in an age where the 'screen', in all its manifestations, is becoming predominant that a reappraisal of approach is of increasing importance.

+A salutary illustration of the need for this lies in the ubiquitous new typeface designs, masquerading as innovation. How much of the current typographic experimentation generated on screen is directly concerned with anything other than print?

+Polemics abound, the book is neither dead nor dying. Debate and development concerning the culture of communication via the screen remains in its infancy.

+Graphic Design is at a point in its history where it must become proactive rather than reactive; the emergent technologies allow us to renegotiate our collective identities and direct a new generation of designers towards careers as cultural activists as well as visual engineers

NOBLEZBCV.PORT.AC.UK

1994   neu

Technowledge

tually doing with graphic design. The politics of how much you're in control and how much you're controlled by — or how much we're working for a system, enhancing other people's views or making them look worse. In my everyday job, I'm forced to repackage something nicer so it can be sold. Producing *Cactus* is a fight against that. With *Cactus* we have the freedom to say what we want.

Anne: *So as an alternative practice, as you might call it, Cactus, and later, Feeding Squirrels to the Nuts, is an activity that you can take part in. But is it something that can replace employment?*

Tony: Not for me; it doesn't make any money. *Squirrels* hasn't made much money yet. We've been busy selling but we've got to sell a lot more before we break even. The selling price is quite low for the amount of money we've put in because we're more interested in having people buy it than in making a big profit.
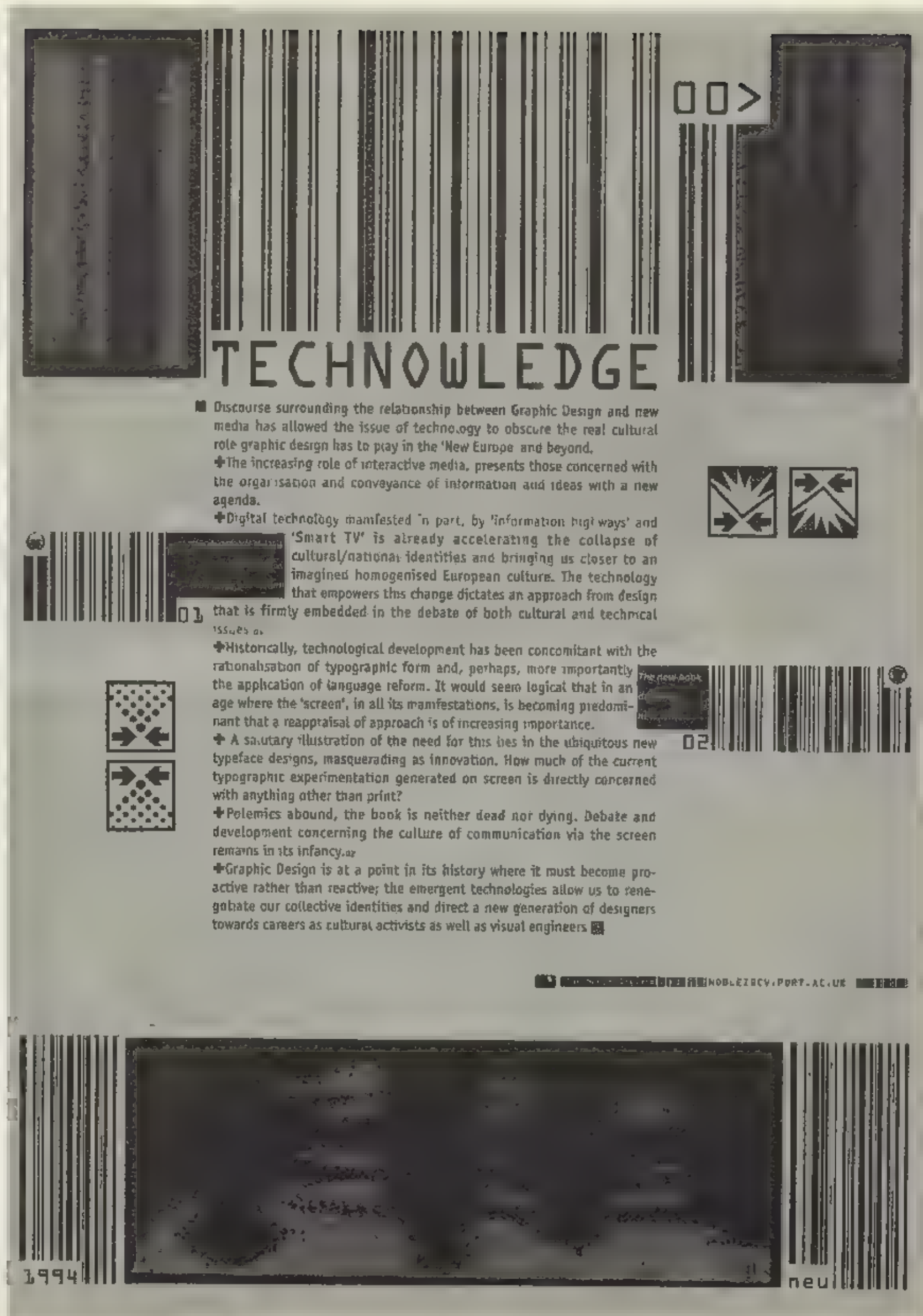
Cactus was a big loss. We knew that from the start. We worked as freelancers to pay for it. I suppose it's just a matter of keeping the ideals alive on the side so we can still go to work. Otherwise we get disillusioned.

Anne: *I'm sitting at my desk looking up at this poster by Elliott Earls — are you familiar with his fonts and The Apollo Program? He just put out a cd-rom and he's trying to carve a place for himself and make money from it so it's the only thing that he does. He also does freelance work on the side. It's interesting to me from a pragmatic point-of-view how people go about creating an alternative place within practice.*

Tony: I've always tried to keep the two things totally separate, so that when Glenn and I are doing *Cactus*, it's what we believe in. Then, when we go to work, it's just a job that could just as well be many other things. It's certainly not fulfilling. It's just for the money.

Anne: *There's one last quote I'm going to throw your way that seems apt to this discussion. It's from Ian Noble, from the Technowledge poster. He says, "The emergent technologies allow us to renegotiate our collective identities*

The Data Resort
DESIGN: Dominique Callewaert, Thomas Soete
Mario Beernaert, Karen Herreman
[Cloaca Maxima]

and direct a new generation of designers toward a career as cultural activists as well as visual engineers." *This sounds like what you're up to.*

Tony: At the University of Portsmouth, we've all got this view of graphic designers as being activists within the system, with political ends, rather than just producing work. It's been a running theme throughout the whole college, especially in graphic design.

Anne: *I would argue that you can't get away from doing politics in your work: that everything that you do is political, or is promoting a particular world view.*

Tony: I feel that that is a problem; I feel that I'm promoting someone else's world view and not my own. In that way, I try not to associate too much with the commercial work that I'm doing, which is primarily for magazines where you're just telling people about more things to consume.

Anne: *Well, then how would you restructure the way that you make your money, the way that you spend your day and the projects that you do?*

Tony: I think at the end of the day, I will start a studio and do graphic design. Maybe the *Squirrels* project will develop into something where we can make money, although that wasn't the aim. I like to keep these things away from money, because I think they retain a lot more of their credibility I've seen while do-

ing *Squirrels* how much marketing I've had to do, and how much I resent marketing full stop. But I have to do it, because I've invested so much money in it. It's been a very strange project for me in that way, actually.

Anne: *It's difficult; I mean, there's no way to escape being caught up in capitalism. You can't get outside of it, so you have to learn to work within it.*

Tony: I like graphic designers like Jan van Toorn; I respect him. He does say you cannot get away from it, that you've got to work from within. I do think that's true to a certain extent. But I'm skeptical about how much you can change by just changing a few images here and there. The few people who can understand the images you're manipulating already understand the message you're trying to get across. To the majority of people, what you do as a graphic designer is nothing more than creating a lot of pretty graphics

Anne: *That's why I became a teacher. (laughs) I get to plant the seeds of dissent in young minds. What's the one thing you would want to get across to students?*

Tony: Do your own thing. Do it yourself, don't wait for other people to do it for you I think a lot of us learned down at Portsmouth that we didn't have to wait until we left college to print something and why do everything internally in the college, why not externalize everything?

Interview with Glenn Orton

Anne Burdick: *I want to start by asking you about the political agenda of* Cactus *and* Feeding Squirrels to the Nuts.

Glenn Orton: Both Tony and I are quite politically motivated. I think we try to encourage people to work politically in the work they submit to *Cactus*.

Anne: *What do you mean by "work politically"?*

Glenn: Some of the work that is submitted to *Cactus* doesn't really make a direct political comment. Sometimes it's just a piece of painted paper. But nothing is edited out; there is total freedom from censorship. It's about freedom of information and the exchange of ideas. That's quite a political thing in itself. Very few people have access to writing for a daily newspaper. Very few people have access to putting their own views across within other kinds of media, like T.V. I see *Cactus* as providing the platform for that. Everything that comes in we publish. We're trying to get away from an elitist or a totally edited one point-of-view.

Anne: *What about the editorial policy for* Squirrels?

Glenn: Editorially, we asked the designers to collaborate with writers. A few did, but we want to try to encourage a bit more writing for the next one. When we try to sell it, if we're trying to justify it as a poster magazine rather than just a poster set, it's easier to explain to people if they can see that there's a lot of text. Some of the posters are just illustrations of an argument rather than the text that provides the debate.

Anne: *What do you see as the value of collaboration between writers and graphic designers?*

Glenn: When we were studying at Portsmouth College of Art, we were encouraged to work in collaboration with people outside the design course. In the real world, people from totally different professions have to work together all the time. We enjoy working with other people. We think it's important to work with people in other disciplines.

Anne: *How do the ideas that are going on in the* Cactus *Network feed into your commercial work?*

Glenn: We had a studio in London and we wanted to develop more work along the lines of *Cactus* and tried to get some more political work to do within the studio. But a lot of the time we found ourselves busy doing work on magazines, freelancing. The freelance status gave us the opportunity to work two weeks, then devote a week to *Cactus*, etc., rather than having full-time jobs. But really, the *Cactus* work doesn't tie into the work we do for magazines.

Anne: *I'm curious about what the options are for graphic designers who are critical of graphic design and the way it's practiced — the sort of unspoken politics of being in the position of a graphic designer — and also what your relationship is with your clients and who your clients are.*

Glenn: One reason why we're both working for magazines is that we're dead against working in advertising. I used to have a problem saying I was a graphic designer. I was embarrassed, actually. You know, in England there was a graphic design boom in the 80s. On the t.v., in the adverts, you'd see graphic designers in very expensive suits. They'd all go to wine bars and things like that. It got very high profile for a few years in England. But for me and Tony, one reason we were able to carry on with *Cactus* is that neither of us was very materialistic. We don't need to save money to buy cars. We invested our money in another way. A lot of money went into *Cactus*, some on records, and every now and again, some on beer.

Anne: *If you were talking to students who enjoy the activity of creating graphic design and who were looking for ways to not be participants in any kind of, I don't know, capitalistic exploitation, what avenues are there? There is only so much room for projects like* Squirrels*, and* Cactus*, and* Emigre... *There is only so*
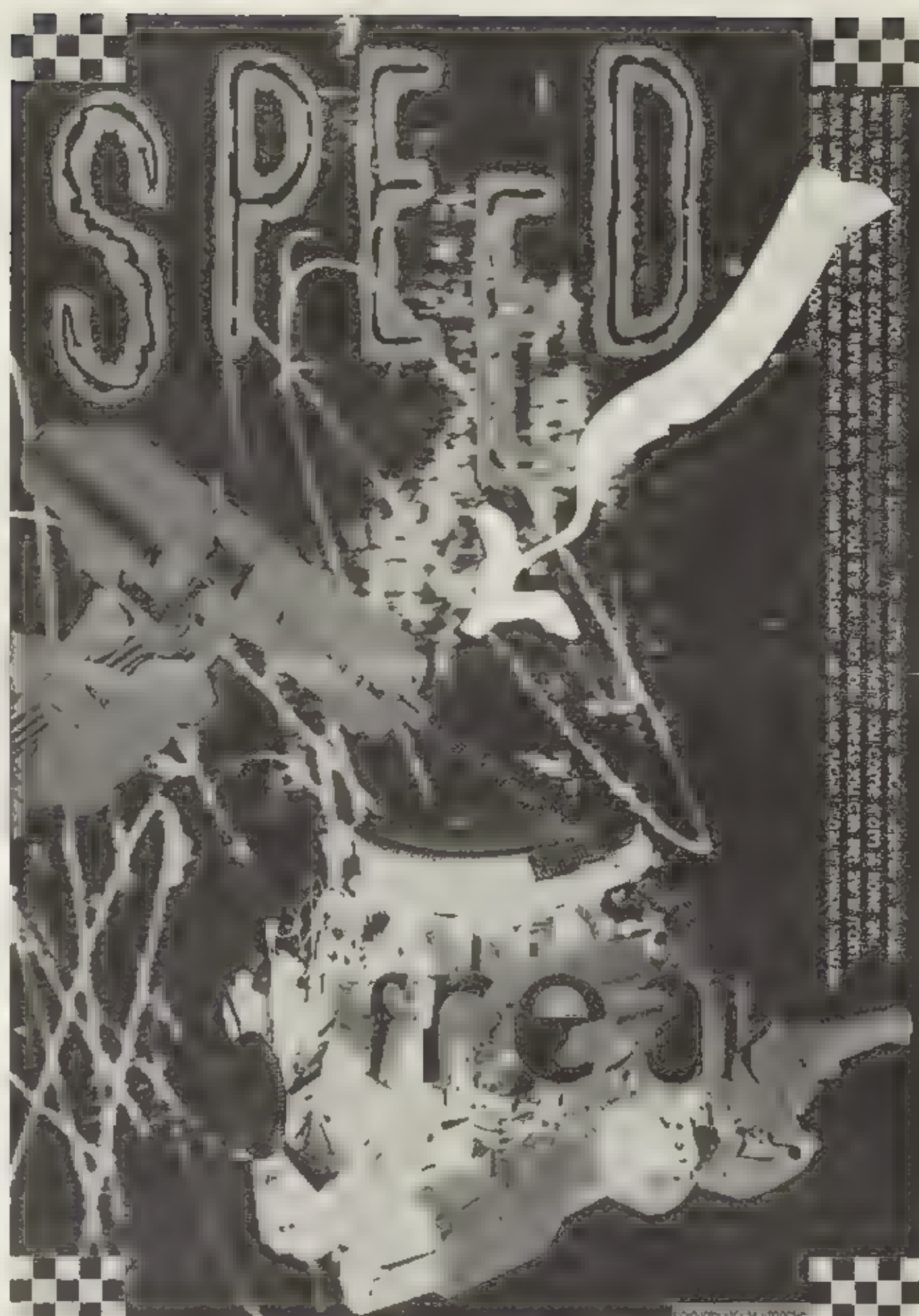
DESIGN: Tim Morse [Colored Hard]

Speed Freak

My experience with *Cactus* started about three years ago, when *Emigre* ran a sidebar story on the project. In undergraduate school, I wrote a thesis dealing with many of the same issues and have been a contributing member ever since. Tony approached me about the *Feeding Squirrels to the Nuts* project, and I thought it would be a nice complement to the *Cactus Network*.

We began the project by bouncing ideas off each other in the form of sketches and written descriptions sent via mail/fax/modem. I thought it was interesting to brainstorm with people of different cultures and residences. Unknown factors, such as word definitions and meanings, came into play. Modeled after something fast and furious, I started with the concept of how quickly everything changes with technology, which evolved into a drag-racing theme.

With such a loose brief, each poster was able to work on its own, as well as with the set. After seeing each of the other participant's posters, I fine-tuned my own piece, ran out separations and sent them to Tony. The next thing I saw was the finished poster, as well as a sample set. It was interesting having no control over the printing. It's good to let fate lead you somewhere. It was like shooting a roll of photos, sending them out to get developed and not knowing exactly what would happen until you saw the results.

TIM MORSE

placeless

culture

YOU ARE HERE

(our culture is becoming essentially placeless)

DESIGN: Melissa Price

much space for graphic designers talking about graphic design. So, how can you work for a pop magazine and make that a political act or a political statement? Can you?

Glenn: Well, you can in a way. Sometimes I'll slightly enlarge a photo to get the McDonald's symbol out. No need to give McDonald's free advertising. That's one way of working. I still produce the magazine, but it's just my way of editing it, I suppose. You can also work on a local level. You don't have to produce something as large and international as *Cactus*. There are plenty of local activist groups around who need work done.

Anne: *It's tough because a part of the definition of what a graphic designer is is inextricable from the whole commercial network. I mean, just to be defined as a profession within a capitalist culture means that you're already bound up in it in a certain way.*

Glenn: Part of the job of a graphic designer is to take a message from the client and give it to the public. Unless you're working for a political client, you're selling a product at the end of the day.

I get a bit fed up with this argument between graphic designers and artists. Artists are supposed to be the tortured ones and they have the conscience and graphic designers go out and make the money. For me and Tony, that definitely isn't so. I've got the skill of communication, which I've studied. I know how to produce something, not a one-off as an artist might do, but I can arrange to have it printed in 10,000 or 100,000 copies. I don't necessarily have to sell something. It could be a comment or a statement or expression rather than just a promotion of somebody else. Some people have called us artists before, and I really don't

like that word, and I got fed up with graphic designers. I suppose I call myself a "communicator."

Anne: Squirrels *doesn't operate by the same open editorial policy as the* Cactus Network *did, right?*

Glenn: It's not open for people to come and go as they please. If someone wants to print 2,000 posters then we'll put them in the box. Tony and I wouldn't have a problem if the content were all along the same lines. We don't edit people's words or work. If we think that their work has to be a bit different because two of the posters are the same or something, we'll talk to them about it. Because if you have a box of ten posters and three of them are the same, then it's not really a good value for the money.

Anne: *There's an interesting contradiction in what you're saying here. When you're talking about editorial direction, you put it in terms of marketing, audience and sales, as opposed to having a clear vision of what you guys want it to be. Instead, it sounds more like, "What are the expectations of the audience?" The fact that you're worried about selling it comes across a lot.*

Glenn: I think we're worried about selling it because we put all our money into it. If it didn't work, that could be the end of *Cactus* for some time because of the amount of money involved. *Squirrels* is a bit different, because I think the collaboration is an important part of it. Also, it's getting designers to produce something that makes comments rather than just producing their own portfolio and saying, "Look, here's my work and isn't it wonderful?" We wanted to create something a bit more useful. Spreading a message or creating a debate. And also, you know, you do get some nice posters, as well.

END

It is the one chandelier of confusion. It is a monster of circumspection. Likewise, in troubled times, the poet... —Francis Ponge

He was seized, kneaded by intelligible hands, bitten by a vital tooth, he entered with his living body into the anonymous shapes of words, giving the substance to them, establishing their relationships, offering his being to the word "be". —Maurice Blanchot

Until finally, everything sinks into my body, and flies out through my head, as though through a chimney open to the sky. —Francis Ponge

Metaphor from the familiar to the strange. Translation from the strange to the familiar. The failed metaphor is too strange, the failed translation too familiar. —Eliot Weinberger

BITING THE MONSTER AT CHIMNEY LEVEL
Brian Schorn

BITING so shut up now and listen to me confused listen to the shrimp life glistened by command command and the end of it bite the end off misunderstanding tubes the gut there now into my body grows a shackled tooth the sexy design of the whole thing compromised by trouble so double the offering and make something careful make a word a good bite good any more than any other who is to say my tooth has bitten off a stupid idea? my tooth the idea divine? who says the placement? "here" i said as if i really know that biting down the caustic gauze indicating tooth crater pontificate how the intestine hangs freely which doesn't make any sense how to make the bite make gorgeous sense of chandelier the rapids how to get a hold a ride the rapids of sense kneaded? losing the whole inside of the thought to the tooth the bowel in the heart of the making make the bite bark Dogwise including jowl pink The mouth i mean as the center of the world moving out into the world as working tooth treatment site the whole action in a grid delayed but why the movie so close up and meaningful so right the moving chandelier you say no to the movie jaw i say the jaw is final finally jaw wing flying out the abode has been all been times troubled in the forefront The warfront sinking into the body host bullet type crowned the cap so clearly the impact blow out now what sees dilemma? **MONSTER** you are going to have to wait, all of you all the waiting coming to greet the monster forget the waiting, so what the waiting not a need not a one who really cares the smile out yank the tooth design my mouth to pieces have the monster piece and grin the color apart grin the sexual seat placing that certain letter there is oh baby the monster there your ankle in the moonlight showing monster hair you the monster whoa wait out the ball break and i'll stick my hair unkind fuck the monster sunk in style stick it in the pocket with no where to go come and go i said let me ram my head into wall blocks in order to fling the right intent? oh this is kissing how metaphor is kissed and loved how strange the moths at the laundry shed is the working half on yet? or the monster at the neck base biting succulent earth light working half more a monster in the guise of migraine holding back if any make the offerings religious if that might help existing monster-saint at the church door waiting the first spark to death any room to kneel? hands folded in a shape a picture would fit my hands can do this? my shrimp-tailed hands at the moment start false no start so no simple design could illustrate this dumb so what anything the monster play some belly for that tongue throttle see the throttle capsize at the monster's throat spit out tongues to gloss the meaning so vague in a forest full of noes yes the chopping **CHIMNEY** not one the curtain raises itself on its own accord or by someone great and the action is there with fire tending tools a man floats as if an ordinary man to the very see of the monster proclaiming i see windows without any walls? the unsightly slashing of newspapered hands of poetic justice served right? it served you right goddamn it now make a something of it do it i said now so simple you think to it just right no matter what the organ involved shovel my ashes into piles to make designs with there those ones with the logs left on make a little sweep to clear the edges never a messy see right but the man who was floating so vital for the first time over the cliff? ha! take that of me me in voice of the curtain coming down me floating a small moment could make a difference in the compass point shut up and float have patience in the wood part in between a week of toothless animal corrections just breathe the chimney smoke it bites work the tooth the living body rubbed wrong but willing This all means something to be said in another way an open way to the sky that an image and a word could say fool bitten off again by the ugly monster full of attention Give some why not say it? simply seize the anonymous chimney of words of images sleeping in the throaty monster shape how can i say this familiar? familiar to fool the fiery gate of every flaw To let it slip by the monster's foot unattended to stick a pin in its toe and laugh sleep my friend, sleep the sky open in order to exist oh the work to be done The chandelier singing happy in the chimney hole **LEVEL** i give off the scent of something as small as can be as big as regular intervals i mean to put two and two together in order to get a fight at the chimney level no more of this weather slashed through my fingertips not knowing where to put it on this level i dream you are a gorgeous monster of invisible proportions i love you which is already out to sea i float on a raft made of green hands which massage my living body i am a raft-glove becoming less familiar with each finger come back and take a look at me the monster ashore i look at a page and the words fall out of a sound from a second The level means the fingers are letting blood in a way bitten no monster to jerk the gut leash doggie-doggie with the light brown hair i adore the simplicity of that so it is done and my fingertips say so i want that picture with a bit of her passing by and that word of her leaving against this so there it is and the level lets it The flying really starts out and i don't know The chimney with my head size so familiar i think The sky today strange for a moment

CLICK*
CL**ICK
CLICK

Writingdesign **Designwriting**
by Louise **Sandhaus**

Exploding ideas about design / writing

* In the catalog for the Pop Art show that toured the U S a couple of years ago, there was an essay by cultural observer Dick Hebdige. In it he described the term "pop" not as the "pop" in "popular" but "pop," the textual onomatopoeia of the sound "pop." But "pop" is not much of a bang for something so seemingly loud and significant as the impact when one world (the high art world) suddenly recognizes this whole other world (the everyday culture world). But we were talking about "click." Could this small, light blow be the sound of a big bang in digital space — the collision of the world of writing and the world of design?

This is an essay.

An essay explores ideas.B-) This is an essay that explores the idea of the essay itself and what the essay might be in the context of computer-based publications. I would like to explore the idea of the examination of ideas given that the parameters for defining form and content become muted and indistinct in digital publishing environments. :-|

(B-)) Just to be sure, I looked up "essay" in the dictionary, thinking that I would find a definition that had something to do with writing. To my surprise, the first definition of the word was "an attempt." It wasn't until the third definition that there was anything about writing at all, and this was a "concise" dictionary, not one of those 12 volume deals, so it had to get to the point quickly.

Ed G W Davidson, M A Seaton, and J Simpson The Wordsworth Concise English Dictionary, (Hertfordshire Wordsworth Editions Ltd. '984, p 129

(:-|) I'm imagining something here beyond the garden variety periodical in our own digital present, where computer-based publications dot the electronic landscape like ants on a leftover Twinkie. For the most part, few are more than elaborate hyper-versions of print, only with a larger and more diverse network of links — not unlike footnotes found in print-based essays.

From Colorcards **What's Wrong** comp by Clare Matheson and Judith Queensborough (Oxon Winslow Press undated) This image is from a series used to train children to recognize what's "wrong" in a pictured scenario

These new environments are the collision of a variety of communications means (print, digital and telecommunicative), ways (words, images and sounds) and forms (stories, essays, drawings, music, etc.), (that are frequently associated with pleasure and entertainment.) But primarily, we could describe digital environments as structured spaces that are visual, textual and aural. Each aspect draws on its own language to express and communicate. :-) , :-)

Like a book (interactive and relying on the possibilities of textually-based narrative construction), like a film (scripted visual stories in 4-dimensional space), like architecture (spatial and navigational), like TV (passive, pleasurable entertainment in an intimate environment) — like all of them (relying on conventional languages) and yet not like any single one of them. No lone model, language, precedent or convention can describe the conveyance of ideas through this medium.
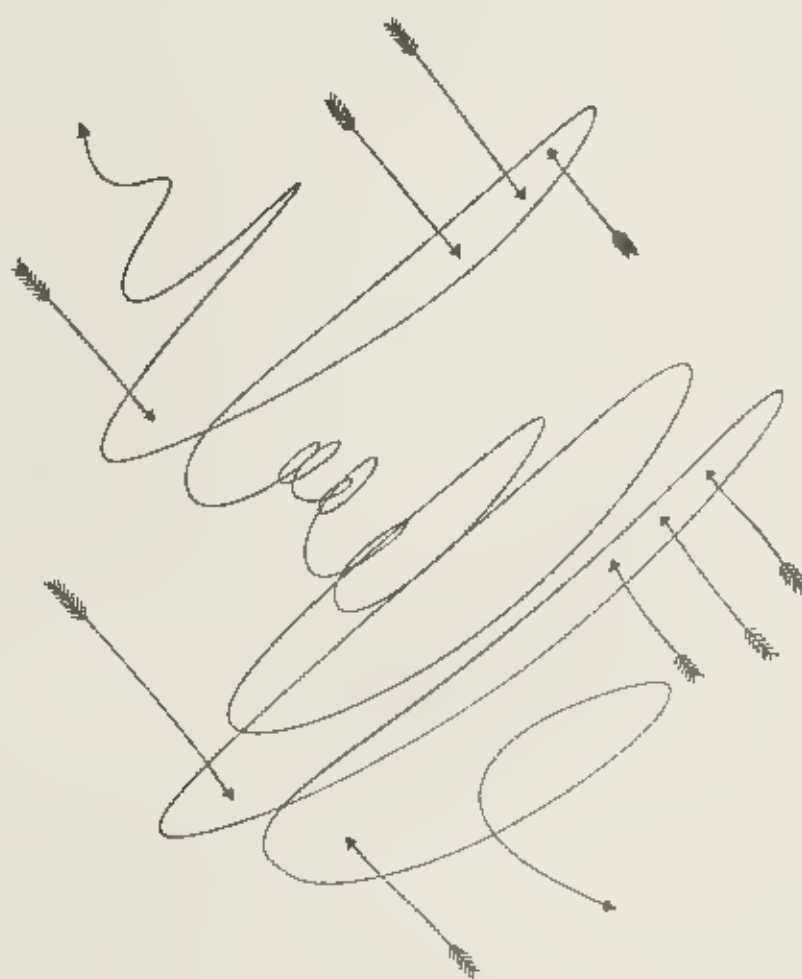
* I'm laying around the house with a friend, shooting the shit about art and literature, and in the course of things she tells me about her mom who teaches high school English. Mom gives the students the usual assignments: Read such and so and write an essay about the ideas contained in chapter _____. That sort of thing. But her mom also has her students make drawings of the ideas. I'm really amazed at this and I keep trying to picture it. (Oops, a conundrum already!) I wonder about making a picture of a written idea, an idea that originated from words. how would a student — one not trained to relate ideas in ways other than with words — begin to grapple with what kind of picture to make or how to make a picture of an idea at all?

My brain rattled around the notion of the relationship between words and images. I thought, what if you made a picture of an idea that did NOT refer to something written, what would IT look like? It was then that I understood why my friend makes drawings, or photographs, or paintings and doesn't write with words.
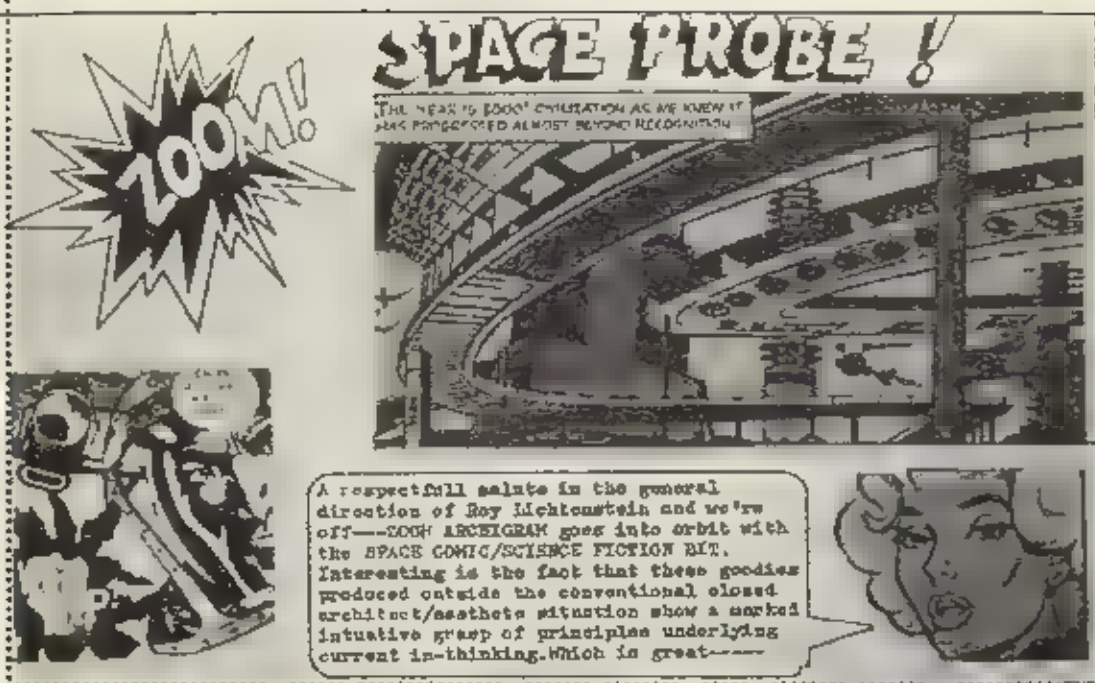
During a recent lunch with a friend, he tells me about an interview he saw on TV with the scriptwriter for the Surrealist filmmaker Luis Buñuel (of the razor-sliced eyeball fame). The writer was asked about the relationship between the script and what Buñuel made. In response he described this scene where a woman in knight's armor was to make love with a man. Well, needless to say, making love under those circumstances has to be somewhat complicated, so all the scriptwriter could do was write. "Woman in knight's armor makes love with man." No volumes of words could picture it; writing is one thing and making images is another.*
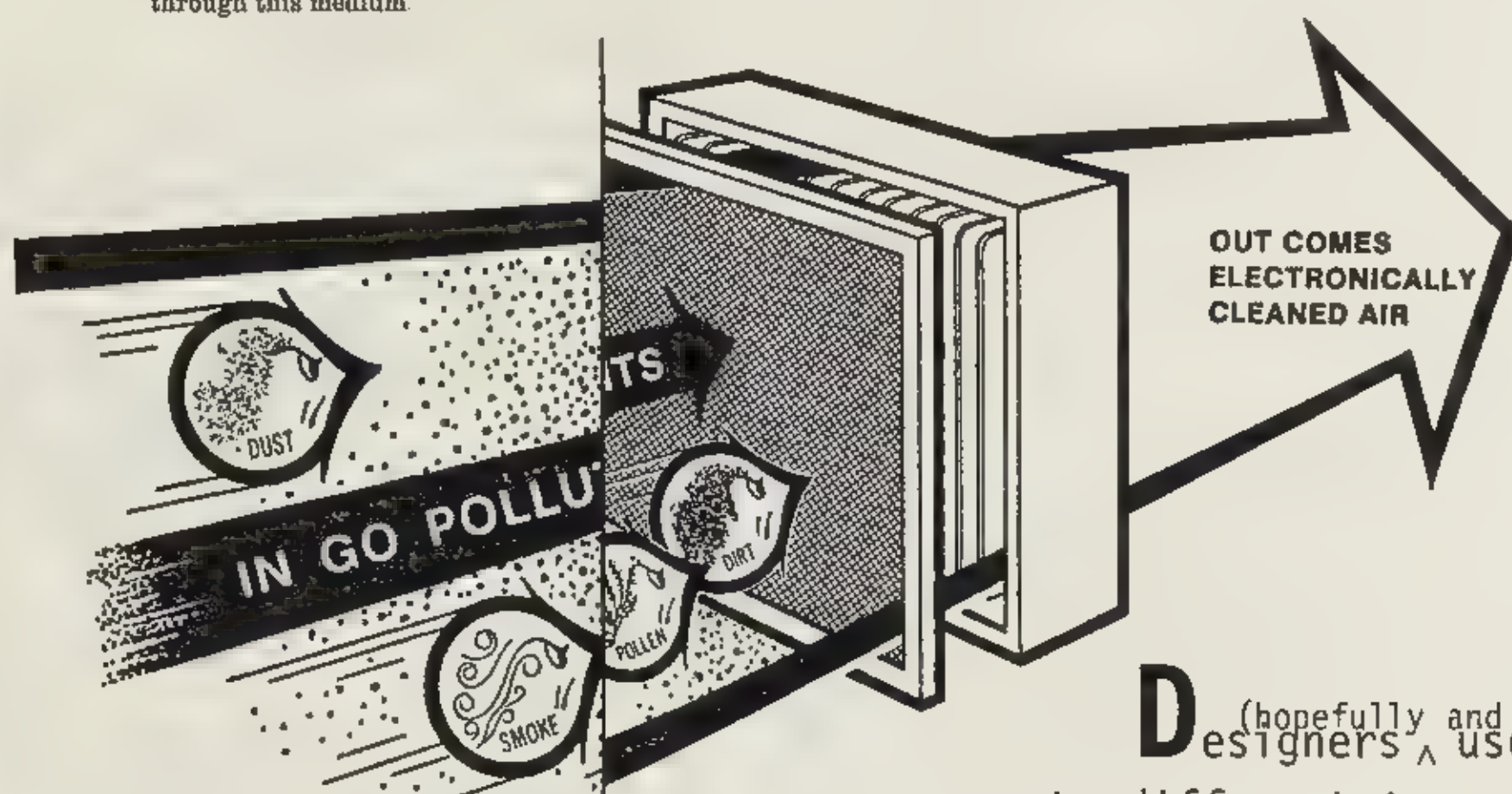
IN GO POLLUTANTS

DUST   DIRT   POLLEN   SMOKE

OUT COMES ELECTRONICALLY CLEANED AIR

Designers (hopefully and broadly speaking) use their skills to give shape to different types of information and ideas by utilizing different means, ways and forms. We work and play in the realms of meaning and the means by which meaning is made and carried, giving form to ideas and ideas to form. We make things comprehensible within a given context to a particular audience. And since we like to think of ourselves as something other than communications engineers, hopefully we charm and delight somewhere along the way. :-*
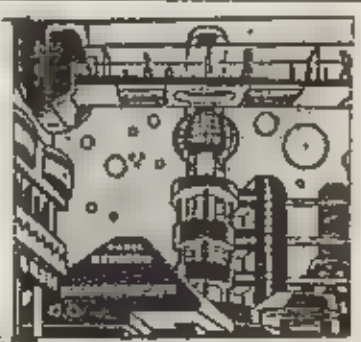
SPACE PROBE !

THE YEAR IS 2000! CIVILIZATION AS WE KNEW IT HAS PROGRESSED ALMOST BEYOND RECOGNITION

ZOOM!!

A respectfull salute in the general direction of Roy Lichtenstein and we're off——ZOOM ARCHIGRAM goes into orbit with the SPACE COMIC/SCIENCE FICTION BIT. Interesting is the fact that these goodies produced outside the conventional closed architect/aesthete situation show a marked intuitive grasp of principles underlying current in-thinking.Which is great——

These SPACE COMIC cities reflect without conscious intention certain over-tones of meaning——illuminate an area of opinion that seeks the breakdown of conventional attitudes,the disruption of the "straight-up-and-down" formal vacuum——necessary to create a more dynamic environment.

:-% ("architecture" + "telegram")

See A Guide to
Archigram 1981 74,
(London, Academy
Group Ltd., 1984)

In 1964, Archigram ∧ Group, the experimental architectural group inspired by technological and cultural development, introduced "Zoom," the 4th issue of the group's publication Archigram. Here they maneuvered oeuvre in order to illustrate that which dense philosophical verbiage (architectural and other) obliterates. Using science-fiction comics, they explored space and spaces while making their own (essayistic) space.

Combining the abilities of designers with the nature of electronic environments, where how something is said conveys ideas as much as what is said, it seems like just the right time, place and space for some explosive idea exploring. So, "[i]f the audience has changed, and the production has changed, and the messages might change, wouldn't common sense suggest that the notion of form might evolve too?"** :-‰

:-*

"Design," according to design educator, historian and practitioner, Lorraine Wild, "is thought made manifest.[...] History has shown us that the best graphic design is synthetic — it is the work that makes imaginative connections between different disciplines or modes of thought...." Design is an activity that moves ideas across terrains, creating imaginative common ground — a "debabelizing" process that sorts through a variety of languages to create a comprehensible product. What this definition doesn't describe is a single way of expressing an idea: Writing, for example, as well as typography, could equally apply within this description.

Adding to this, historian of form turned form-realizer, Frances Butler, referring to the context of computer-based media, states that designers are "familiar with the non-linear thought process called lateral thinking and are in an excellent position to attempt representation of the primal visual flux in which lateral thinking can occur...." What she refers to is that designers, already accustomed to lateral thinking because of their familiarlity with metaphor* — a lateral process that takes one form and turns it into another, richer, communicative form — are able to deal with non-linear communications — doing so for an audience that is thinking and assimilating ideas and information in non-linear terms.

*However, Butler also states: "Visual metaphor, the operative process within lateral thinking has not had a 'good name,' being associated with popular culture, the unschooled, or illiterate, the primitive and the female." But this story is to come.

Together, these descriptions put forth designers as being prepared to represent ideas in environments where different types of information exist in complex symbiotic relationships, under circumstances that call for a different type of encounter altogether.

Lorraine Wild, "More Than a Few Questions About Design Education," The Design Journal Vol 1, No. 2, (Chicago: American Center for Design, 1983), p. 8

**Lorraine Wild, "Lost and Found," from The Edge of the Millennium: An International Critique of Architecture, Urban Planning, Product and Communication Design, ed. Susan Yelavich, (New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1993), p. 202

Frances Butler, "The New Demotic Typography: The Search for New Indices," Visible Language 29.1 (Providence: Rhode Island School of Design, 1994), pp. 90-91

Drawing by Bruce Eric Kaplan, ©1995.
The New Yorker Magazine Inc.
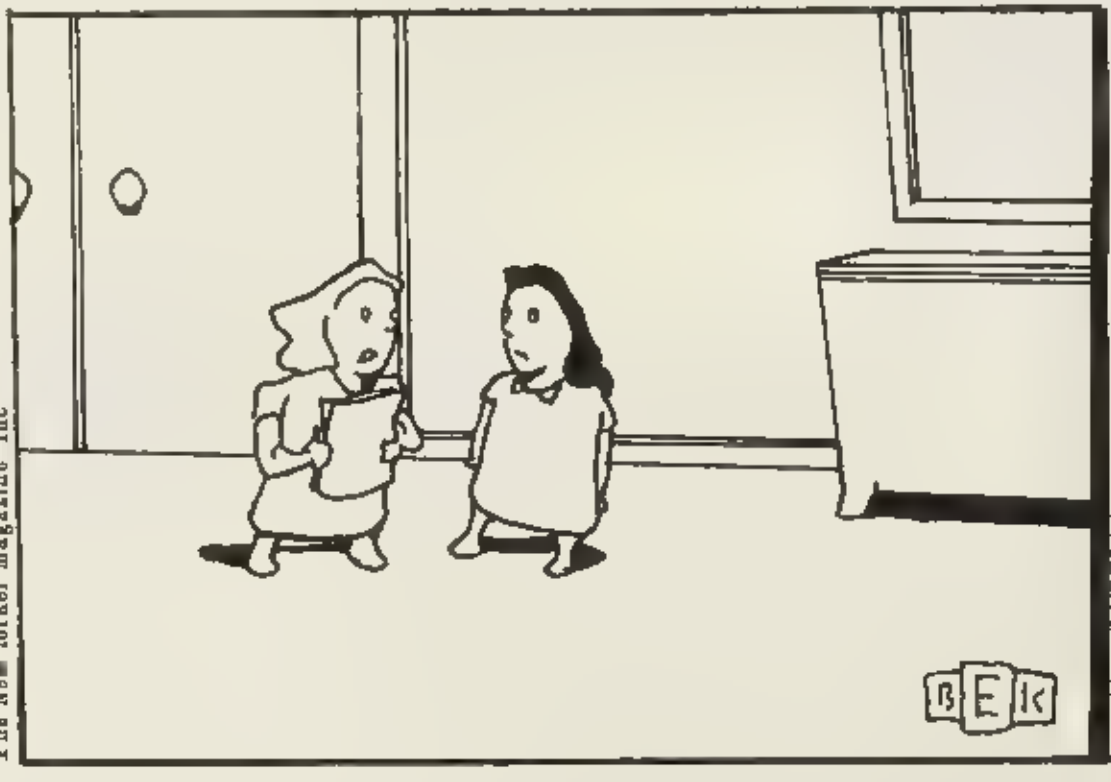
"You know, it's a picture book. Needless to say, it doesn't have a lot of narrative scope."

>:-)

[It] "...represents a highly suspect epistemology: knowledge through image and emotion, rather than words and reason, infantilising the consumer and further limiting the scope for negotiating with the real world through rationality, and its mirror, plain language. But the idea that image-based communication strategies are somehow an aberration from a plainer, essentialist language use has been one that philosophers have found increasingly difficult to justify..."

Jules Marshall, "Advertising and New Media: from Parasite to Symbiote," Mediamatic 7 #3/4, p. 211

The difficulty with conceiving of a digitally-based essay as something other than text stuffed into 1s and 0s is that text is generally regarded as the standard bearer for conveying complex ideas. So we're talking about a considerable paradigm shift. >:-)

But text hasn't always been the dominant medium for conveying complex ideas. In the 18th century, lively and entertaining visual demonstrations were used to cut difficult ideas into comprehensible slices. :-^
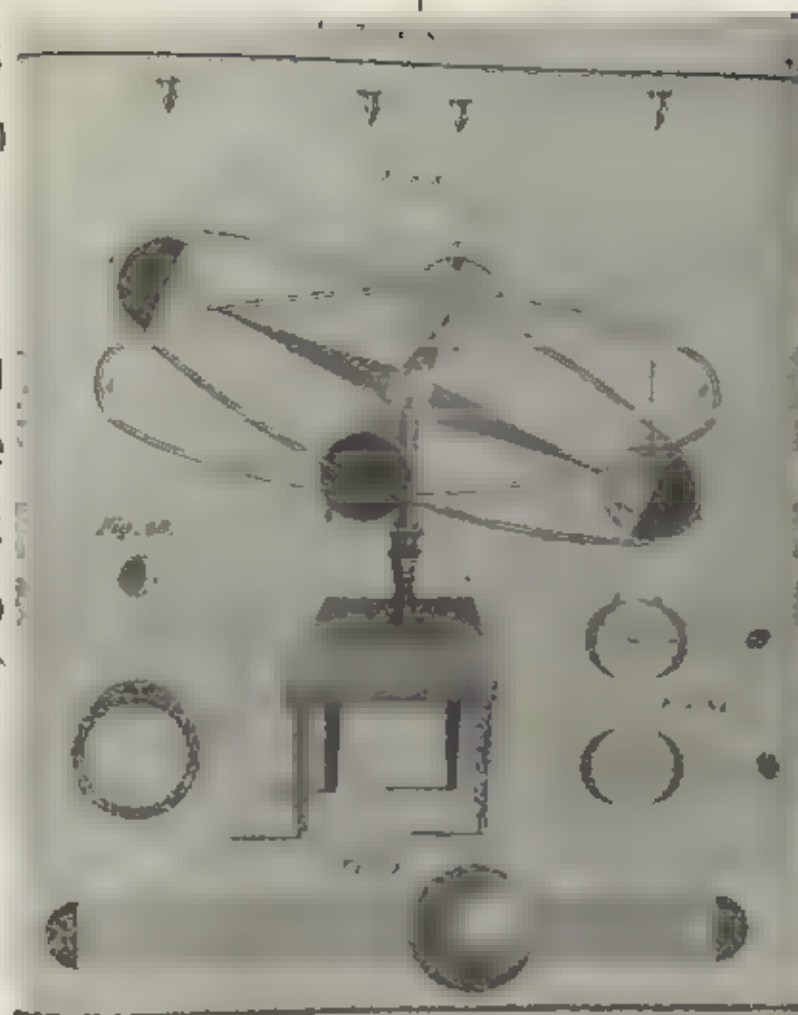
In her book, <u>Artful Science</u>, art historian Barbara Maria Stafford illustrates the way in which public literacy in the 18th century was largely shaped by graphic (visual/performative) demonstrations of knowledge, often using mechanical models. Popular forms of this time (incorporated into what is now deemed the "high" realm of pictorial representations, such as the paintings of Jacques-Louis David or numerous scientific renderings) were used to assist in the understanding of complex abstract ideas. Stafford draws striking parallels between the use of technology and entertainment to relate ideas in the 18th century and the use of these in our own digital present with such things as Infotainment and Edutainment. The criticisms echo as well.
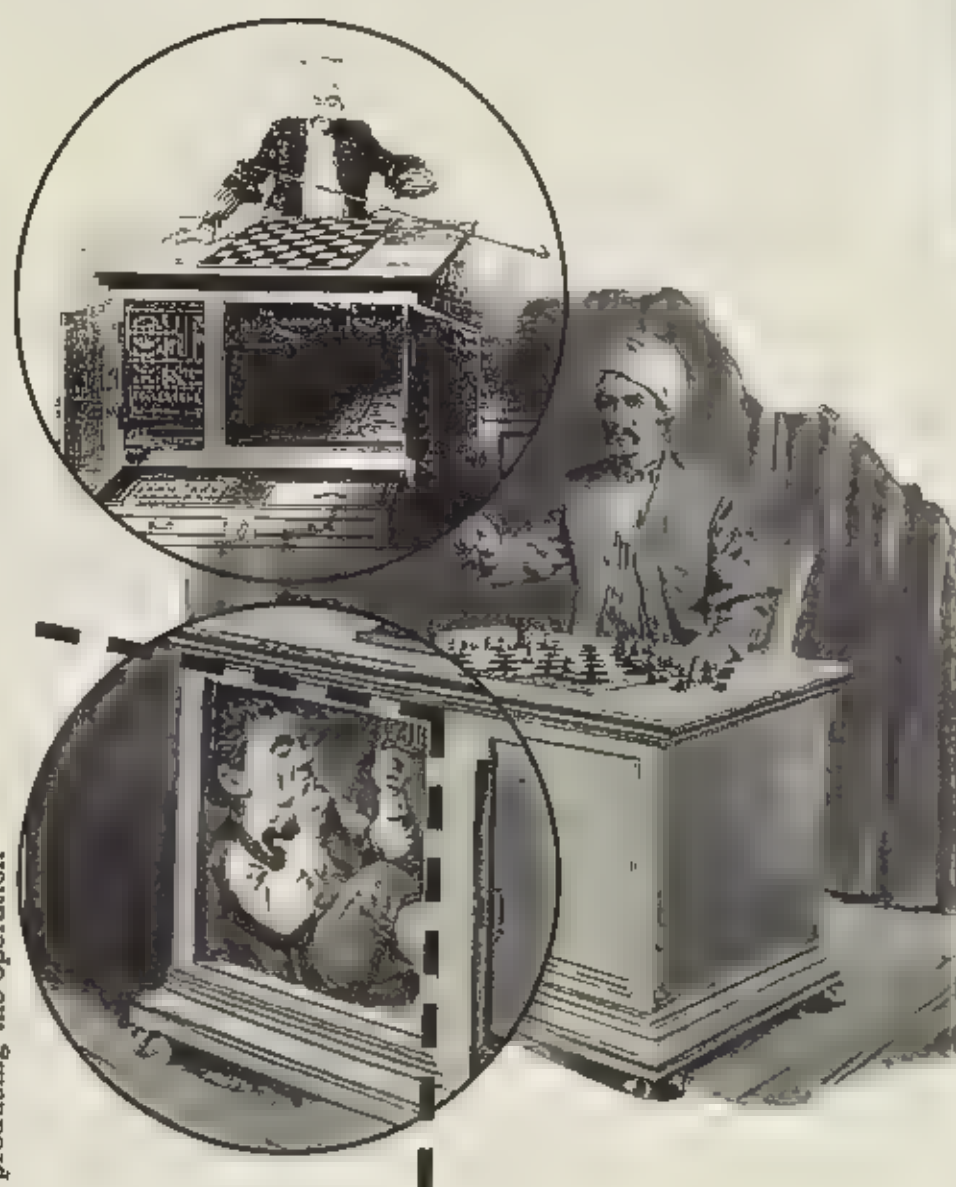
Barbara Maria Stafford, Artful Science: Enlightenment Entertainment and the Eclipse of Visual Education (Cambridge, London: The MIT Press, 1994). Engraving by Emmanuel Barlow, Astronomy, from Adam Walker, A System of Familiar Philosophy, 1799, p.88. (Photo by Barbara Maria Stafford.)

Illustration by Anne-Lies Ihme and Gerd Werner: From Computers to robots. Over chips, software to hardware, computrical, etc by Volker Korndörfer and Robert Scharff. (Hamburg: Deltae, 1983), p. 6. This rendering was actually redrawn from an 18th c. Illustration demonstrating robotics. A machine able to operate without the intervention of a human was thought less likely of duplicity. But in this case the machine actually had no capabilities of its own — there was a dwarf contained inside the cabinet that was producing the operation

Stafford continues that in the 18th century, debate abounded around whether the exchange of knowledge by popular visual demonstration was an "authentic" means of creating an educated polis — or simply a way of duping a beguiled public. The demand for authentic experience has been a consistent paradigm that underlies Western thinking. At its roots, found in classical Greek philosophy, Platonism pits itself against Sophism, giving us the double-edged arguments of communications vs the means of communication: convincing through philosophical arguments rather than through fancy "sophisticated" devices, rhetorical or otherwise. This belief alludes to the reasoning that there is a way to actually get to the idea without the telling of it getting in the way.

These methods became associated with trickery and deception. And I believe this accounts for much of the skepticism that exists in our own technological present towards non text-based means and ways to examine serious contents. :-(

This postcard was circulated around Holland in the summer of 1995. On the reverse side was a letter addressed to President Chirac of France, protesting the nuclear testing in the Pacific that France has since undertaken. The card was distributed by Boomerang Freecards.
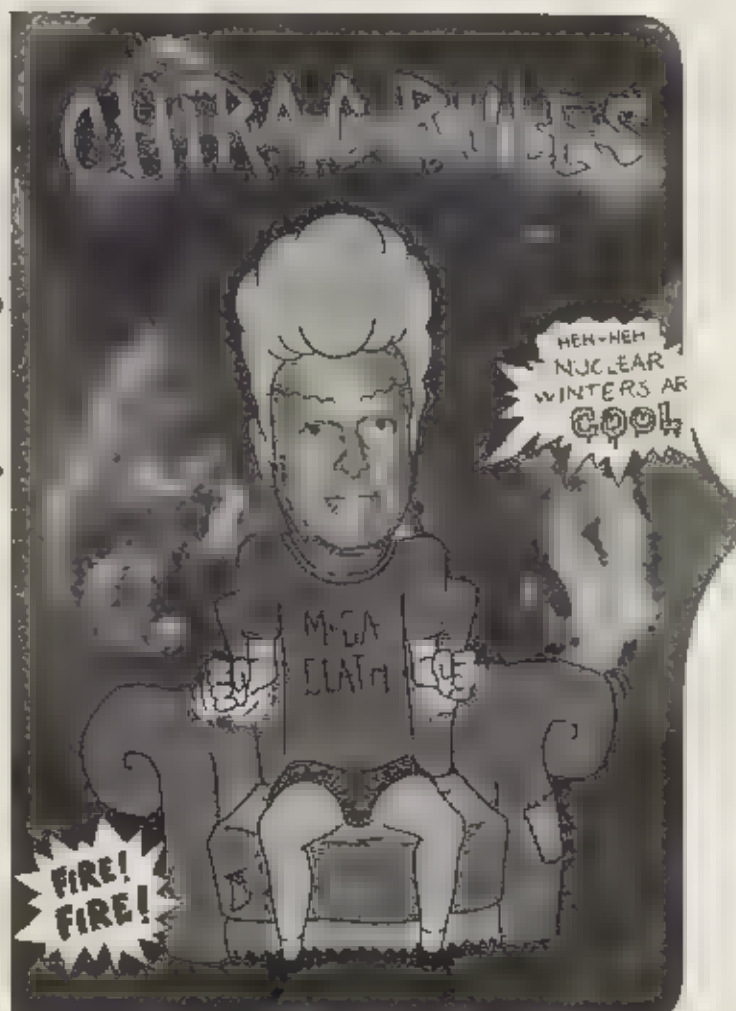
Grappling with ideas in our now time creates further anxiety: associations with popular culture. Forms that simultaneously utilize the communicative abilities of different types of information (words, pictures, sounds, etc.) – interestingly and pleasurably – are generally associated with entertainment, sales pitches or children, but not with the serious examination of ideas.

The word on the street is Paul Smith

These popular forms are influential and powerful communications that avoid dense didactic arguments. They get the message across by maximizing the distinct communicative abilities of different expressive forms. :-o |-+
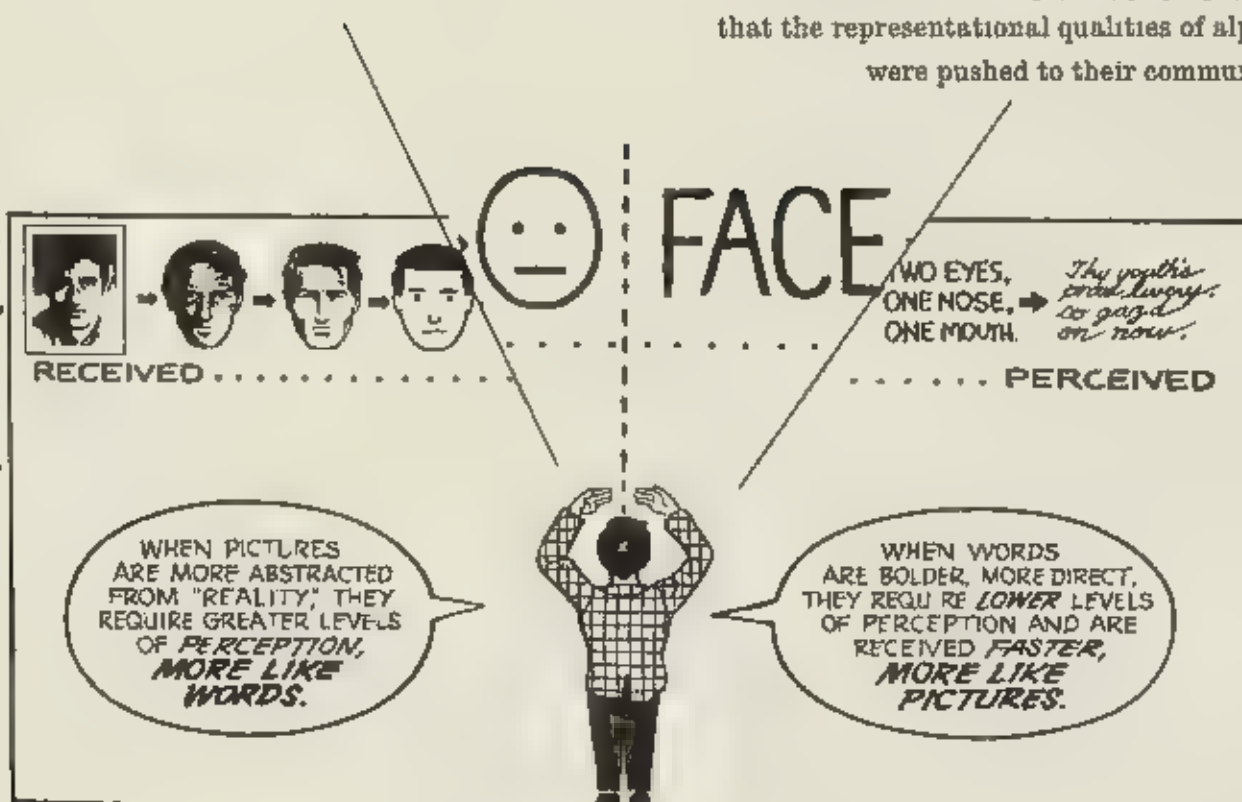
For instance, and referring back to Archigram, comics find the place where words AND pictures together carry the ball of the message — smashing together the iconic "natural" language of pictures and the symbolic abstraction of words.* At some point, they cross roles much like emoticons** do in digital communicative space.

✳✳ When I first saw emoticons, I was amazed and intrigued. A couple of years ago a friend showed me a print-out of a conversation that took place via the internet. These cute little icons made of symbols said to me that the desire to signify was greater than the capability of the words. The simultaneity of the exchange being at once a telephone conversation and a letter seemed to create so strong a desire to add the immediately identifiable expressive qualities that are possible in speech and handwriting (or typography for that matter), that the representational qualities of alphabetic language were pushed to their communicative extremes

✳ If there's a heaven for examples, Scott McCloud's <u>Understanding Comics</u> is it. McCloud maximizes the communicative abilities of visual and verbal forms of expression in order to talk about maximizing visual and verbal forms.

I don't mean to ignore visual art, which powerfully addresses ideas using complex signification, but the meaning of many of these works is often difficult to decipher, requiring highly specialized knowledge. On a second note, artist, curator and critic, Jon Thompson brought to my attention the fact that popular culture has always kept high culture alive, from peasant tunes incorporated into the operas of Tschaikovsky or the symphonies of Stravinsky to the advertising and comics steered onto the shores of art galleries and museums by Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein

RECEIVED . . . . FACE TWO EYES, ONE NOSE, ONE MOUTH. . . . . . . PERCEIVED

WHEN PICTURES ARE MORE ABSTRACTED FROM "REALITY," THEY REQUIRE GREATER LEVELS OF *PERCEPTION, MORE LIKE WORDS.*

WHEN WORDS ARE BOLDER, MORE DIRECT, THEY REQUIRE *LOWER* LEVELS OF PERCEPTION AND ARE RECEIVED *FASTER, MORE LIKE PICTURES.*

The architectonics of the essay, of the forms and their contents are up for grabs. The what and how of conveying ideas are no longer confined to the separate analog worlds of writing and design, but are united on common digital grounds: a place where everything clicks.

table, smoothed it out, and traced the route she wanted me to take by dipping a finger repeatedly into the glass and marking the paper, past Stromness and Disko, past the Crimson Cliffs with a pinkish smear. She turned the chart for me to see, then took a letter from her case saying "please, read—you must". It had been sent from Londonderry by the father of a little girl who had died of gastric fever and whose apparition now visited her brothers and sisters, filled their heads with what he called "scenes" or scrawled prophecies on the parlour wall. Usually the messages were for friends and neighbours, from back street phantoms mostly, but when news of the search arrived in Ireland, it occurred to the family—so the father wrote—to adventure by testing his dead child about the missing expedition:

> When the question was put, Is S. J. Alive? to the surprise of her sister, Anne, the room was filled with Ice, some Channels and a ship in one narrow creek or harbour, between two mountains of snow and ice, in a sort of dilapidated state, with another in the distance. The second question put was, Is S. J. Alive? If So Make Some Signal. In a few minutes she describes a round faced man who ascends the mast and waves his hat. The next question put, Have They Any Provisions? when the same person who ascends the mast, takes a plate of flour and makes it into cakes, holds it to a fire described as by throwing some fat or oil on to it. Anne is also shown a reindeer and a man breaks a hole in the ice and takes up a fish. The question being asked, In What Part Of The Ocean Is S.J.? on the wall are placed large letters, B E C H E .

"I weep when I read it," the explorer's wife said. Such innocence, the careless hurry in the writing! How could the divinations of a little girl not be genuine, poor shadow herself, who could have known only brown skirtings, a stuffed gull with a cruel yellow eye, squalls of dust when the curtains were opened, who now saw frost smoke, ice cake, ice tongues, snow blink, and heard the ice crack echoing? Surely it was beyond the reach of any child's imagining!

The following August, when we landed on Beechey Island, BeECHEy where the dead girl and her sister made us go, we discovered no S-shaped channel in the rotting summer floes, no ships, no fishbone, no flensed reindeer, only washing places, cinders, a few scraps of iron, pages torn from a book, three graves. "More than that? There must have been something!" More than that, a sort of bench or table made of planks and on the top, with a stone on each palm to prevent them from blowing away, a pair of cashmere gloves. They had lain there, sometimes under snow, fingers flexed by gales, fending or beseeching, concealing nothing, for four whole years before we found them. Only when we made our own escape

Rivera, her lodger, a medical student. There had been nothing between them, a few faint words only at either end of the day, but one morning, just as he was leaving the house, when he stopped in front of the hall mirror to tidy his collar, she approached him and stood beside him. Nothing similar having occurred before—no, not remotely–she began to stroke the hair at the nape of his neck with little twists and circlings of her forefinger. Or she ran the same finger outwards along the curve of his shoulder. Or she pressed the tip of her finger against the sensitive part of the temporal bone just behind the *pinna* of the ear, enquiring of him, lullingly, where would be a good place to aim a pistol, should ever the need arise, oh not that it ever would, to shoot someone, to be completely sure of shooting him dead. He remembered what he had seen in the mirror, both their heads encompassed, hers in profile looking in: first his own calf-faced astonishment, then the lustre, the narrow shadow below her cheekbone, the complicated movement of the coaxing eye. And all this Rivera now explained for the amusement of the court, next prodding nervily at his own skull, then attempting to convey the tone of her voice–joking or not, enticing or not–and all the time looking in the direction of where she was sitting propped stock-still behind a rail.

But it was the memory of what had happened in the evening that pricked him most, when, after enduring her caresses so stoically, having anatomised the moment, having fallen asleep in his room as the sun was setting and woken in the dark, he came downstairs to eat and found her in the parlour drawing the curtains shut. She did not look at him, she did not say anything, yet he caught hold of her hand as she brushed past him, brought her fingers to his lips and kissed them, put them inside his lips until she snatched them back, no doubt in sudden alarm. What might she have said about him since? What might she dare to accuse him of?

About a week later he moved out of the house. No; no reason, he said, just offered somewhere more convenient, that was all. Two months after that, he read in the newspaper that a body had been found at his old address (dissolving in a pit of lime, buried under the flagstones in the back kitchen, shot ineptly in the head from touching distance, finished off with an iron bar fetched from the basement). No, he could not say if he had ever seen this other man. Occasional visitors would come and go, silhouetted, voices on the stair. How was he to know?

Every day during the trial she wore a black satin dress tight-fitting at the throat; across her shoulders a dark blue shawl; primrose yellow gloves, so that Rivera never saw her hands again or, rather, saw them every day refigured: severed at the wrist, skinless, fingerless, marrowed, gilded. Whenever a question was put to him,

Introduction/Inscription
ANNE BURDICK

The middle of a magazine might seem like an odd pl

But right now I am in it so deep, I simply can't get outside. Therefore, this is an inscription, a "writing into"; perhaps an attempt to write my way out.

Emigre 35 and *36* are parts one and two of Mouthpiece: CLAMOR OVER WRITING AND DESIGN. An ongoing project, it began with a CALL for papers/projects in February 1995 and continues in various forums and forms. Parts one and two showcase a few of the many excellent projects that had
WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE WORLDS OF WRITING AND DESIGN COINCIDE, OVERLAP OR COLLIDE?
answered the CALL.

Mouthpiece talks through the sometimes differentiated, sometimes dissolved categories of writing and design. As processes, as acts that open the door to meaning, design is writing and writing is design. As professions, their areas of expertise are separate but connected; typography is the intersection at which they meet. And yet the instant that words are made material, the individual meanings of the
DESIGNS ON PAINTING, JOANI SPADARO AND ANDREW BLAUVELT
"writing" and of the "design" can no longer be drawn apart. With typography, they become one.

With this presupposition as a basis and with close to one hundred responses to the CALL, I began including and excluding, editing, demarcating, defining a discourse on my own terms. What were/are my terms? They are many, shifting and sometimes contradictory. The more steadfast "rules" to which I adhered were: 1. No stamp-sized reproductions of existing work. Any work shown has to be read, as well as seen, for I am interested primarily in design that speaks to the "semantic
TYPOGRAPHY AND REFERENCE, GÉRARD MERMOZ
specificity of the text," to quote Gérard Mermoz. 2. The work included has to explore issues that relate to the project through both the content and the form of the inquiry. For example, I would not include a piece about formal English gardens mere-
THE SOCIAL SPACE OF THE PAGE, STUART MCKEE
ly because it had been written and designed by a sole author. However, if the subject of formal English gardens were used metaphorically to discuss, say, the ordered social gathering space of the book, I might include it.

During the editing process, issues specific to design and writing as rose to the surface, weaving their way through the contents of Mouthp one and two: the form-fixing, shape-giving, delimiting functions of la writing, of design), and conversely, the messiness of meaning as it sp the edges of definition, seeping between the cracks, defying contai
"TO GO ABOUT NOISILY": CLUTTER, WRITING
paradox of the prison and the flight of language. I was also interested i ations and uses of the material word—voice, presence, authorship,
THE FUTURE OF WRITING, JOHANNA DRUCKER
agency—issues we live every day in our lives and in our work, whether
BITING THE MONSTER AT CHIMNEY LEVEL, BRIAN SCHORN
books, direct interactive media, teach typography or write design crit

"I do not distinguish between creative and critical
all writing is creative... And all writing is critic
same shifting, selection, scrutiny and judgment of t
hand."   —Nancy Mairs, *Voice Lessons: On Becoming a (W*

Mouthpiece contains a range of conventional modes of (from poetry to photography to criticism. At the same time, many of rations cross categories or manipulate conventions, using visual dialects in a self-conscious way. I included both fiction and non-fictie each for the opportunities it affords. The experience and exposure of t ual designers and writers vary greatly as well. In the end, I selected spoke to the issues I wished to cover, regardless of the speaker, disc only by the dexterity with which the chosen language was spoken.

For example, Kevin Mount, Elliott Earls and Stuart McKee use a means to examine the published word, arriving at very different ends the time and pages of Mouthpiece parts one and two, Kevin's fictitiou from imaginary books, The Voyages of the Desire, based in part on the
THE VOYAGES OF THE DESIRE, KEVIN MOUNT
the Elizabethan pirate-explorers, navigate the space between historical the in/authentic and the authority of the printed page, while skimmi face of language and desire. Elliot, in his manifesto WD40: or, the Im David Holzman's Diary in Mouthpiece part one, harnesses the for
WD40: OR,
sumption *and* production and takes them for a wild, but not reckless, r the traditional boundaries of publishing. In a more academic mode, S at community identity as it takes shape in the worlds of publishing, f the construction of the public face of graphic design in his essay The S of the Page, contained in this issue.

Inter-Views, a set of interviews and comments from *Feeding Squi Nuts* participants, is a departure from the conventional interview, whi stock in the words of the individual author-genius. While the artic reproductions too small to be read, (rules *were* made to be broken), offers an overview of a network, shifting the focus from product to pr

> "arrator's situation impossible, more so today than
> the past? But he must be there, absent and present,
> ween two truths, that of document and fiction."[1]
>   —Jean-Luc Godard, *Germany Year 90 Nine Zero*

lace for an introduction.

language[2] an examination of the multiple viewpoints, inter-
iece parts connections and relationships that facilitate the
nguage (of creation, production and distribution of work. A
ills beyond similar set of "inter-views" with graphic design-
mment; the er/collaborator/joint venturer Steve Farrell,
in the oper- writer/collaborator Steve Tomasula and poet/per-
ownership, formance artist/joint venturer Daniel X. O'Neill,
we design will spill over into *Emigre 37*.
icism.

The Mouthpiece project was initiated with the
writing because question, What issues come into play when the writer
al, requiring the and the designer are one and the same person?
he material at Historically, William Morris, Jan Tschi-
oman) Writer chold, Emil Ruder, Paul Rand and others
expression, made their ideologies manifest in both words and
the explo- form. Artists such as Filippo Marinetti, Guillame
and verbal Apollinaire and the Fluxus group pushed the
on, valuing boundaries of language and its material expression
the individ- in very different ways at different moments. While
work that pictures of these artists' work litter historical sur-
riminating veys of graphic design, critics have only recently
addressed their textual contents and historical con-
variety of texts.[3] Where the writer/designer is concerned,
Spanning there are whole oceans yet to be charted.
al excerpts Contemporary projects of this nature would
journals of include Robin Kinross's self-published statements
quotation, and the critical, editorial and curatorial work of
ng the sur- Ellen Lupton and Abbott Miller, in which these
portance of designers/critics design the books that house their
es of con- words, as well as the personal, poetic and/or fic-
THE IMPORTANCE OF DAVID HOLZMAN'S DIARY, ELLIOTT EARLS
beyond tional visual/verbal explorations of Allen Hori,
tuart looks Martin Venezky and Brian Schorn.[4] In the literary
ousing on world, more frequently in "experimental" or
THE CYCLIC HISTORY OF THE LINE, BRIAN SCHORN
Social Space "underground" literature, projects such as
Raymond Federman's Double or Nothing push the
rrels to the semantic and syntactic dimensions of both word
h places its and page. "Fine" artists and comic book artists
le includes have been engaged in text/image work for quite
Inter-Views some time.
rocess. It is The visual-verbal (i.e. bilingual) "speaker" can

exploit the capacity of each language to signify, shifting between the
two as necessary. At this juncture, this overlap or collision, what
transpires between the writing and the design? What parts of a mes-
sage can only be conveyed through words? Which expressions can
CLICK, LOUISE SANDHAUS
only be transmitted through the visual? What takes place in a collab-
oration? Does the design drive the writing, or does the writing drive
the design? In the more conventional designer/writer relationship,
does a graphic designer "glom" her work on top of the writing, to use
Louise Sandhaus's distinction, or does she erase the writer com-
pletely, axe the writer out in a futile attempt to capture the reins
of meaning, as Adriano Pedrosa proposed in Mouthpiece part one?

The contributors to Mouthpiece worked through these
questions as they brought their design and writing into being. There
were no formatting constraints; each essay was interpreted individu-
ally, whether the designer wrote the content himself, collaborated
A FEW PRINCIPLES OF TYPOGRAPHY, FELIX JANSSENS
with a writer, or designed it without input from the writer. The visu-
WRITING AND DESIGN AND THE SUBJECT, ADRIANO PEDROSA
al clamor that results reflects the varied contents. It is a strategy that
was influenced in part by Barbara Glauber's editorial/curatorial pro-
ject for the Lift and Separate exhibition catalog, in which the indi-
vidual writers designed their own pieces, as well as by Reverb's
design for the art and culture magazine, *Now Time*, in which the
design of each article was derived conceptually from the content of
each individual text.

Students from three universities were invited to design three of
the essays that appear in this issue. Intelligent and provocative self-
initiated projects arrived in response to the CALL from a diverse array
of colleges. But rather than merely show a large number of small *pic-
tures* of existing student work—in repose—I decided to give Emigre
readers the *experience* of the work of fewer students who designed the
actual pages to be read. Brad Bartlett, a senior at North Carolina
State University has situated Stuart McKee's, The Social Space of the
Page. Simon Letherland and Andrew Slatter, recent graduates from
Ravensbourne, collaborated across 200 miles on The Cyclic History of
THE CYCLIC HISTORY OF THE LINE, BRIAN SCHORN
the Line, a creative essay by Brian Schorn. Russ Bestley, a senior at
The University of Portsmouth is very present on the pages of Anne
Bush's Criticism and the Politics of Absence.

While I didn't specifically address every contribution here, I felt it
was important to clarify the choices I made, allowing the pages with-
in which I've written to tell the rest of the story. It was clear from the

In this and other publications, I have pushed for graphic designers to either write or to approach their design as writers, to explore and exploit the privileged position of authorship. My call for designers as authors is not an attempt to attain some false sense of ownership or control—although many of those who are critical of that position say so while reaping the rewards that come with a byline. Admittedly pure presence is a phantom and yet the designer is anything but absent. Like the narrator or the editor, the designer/author who knows she can neither write her way in nor write her way out completely positions herself differently with her work and with those with whom she works. As initiator or working partner, the graphic designer as author collaborates rather than serves or dominates, becoming a more active "writer" and reader, being there in the work and sharing responsibility for—as well as benefiting from—the production of meaning.

sheer quantity of submissions that the discipline is a bit preoccupied with writing at the moment. As various critiques of representation weaken boundaries, communities, professions and disciplines are looking at how they are written. Graphic design in particular has much at stake. As a profession, its borders are both threatened and expanding with the introduction of new technologies and communicative spaces. As a discipline, the rise of criticism and CRITICISM AND THE POLITICS OF ABSENCE, ANNE BUSH graduate-level education may be a beginning, but its maturity demands a WAYS OF LOOKING CLOSER, DENISE GONZALES CRISP substantial body of writing and we have yet to fill out our baggy hand-me-downs. A recent surge of new writing may give muscle to our aspirations. Without repeating his list of the individual manifestations of this movement, I would echo Rudy VanderLans' bold sentiment in *Emigre 34*, "By delving into this recent offering of writing on design, and the new insights these writers and critics provide, it feels more like we're experiencing the Rebirth of Design." While the writing itself matures, it also serves as both record and instigator of change in what we imagine as the roles, respon- TABLE COFFEE TALK, LISA KOONTS sibilities and possibilities for graphic design. Two projects that came to my attention throughout the course of Mouthpiece exemplify this shift.

Plazm Media Cooperative is a magazine, a font distributor and an art collective in Portland, Oregon. The contents of *Plazm* magazine are quintessential coffee-house fare, replete with all the highs and lows the genre engenders. Within the interviews, portfolios, fiction, art pieces and articles, Elliott Earls shares equal billing with Mark Amerika, Laurie JOSHUA BERGER, ART DIRECTOR, PLAZM, P.O. BOX 2863, PORTLAND, OR 97208 2863 PLAZMMEDIA@AOL COM Anderson and Art Spiegelman. All fonts and font designers are listed in the credits, and more importantly, the table of contents names the writer, designer, photographer, artist and illustrator for each article. It is a refreshing acknowledgement of the myriad forces that come together in the realization of the printed page.
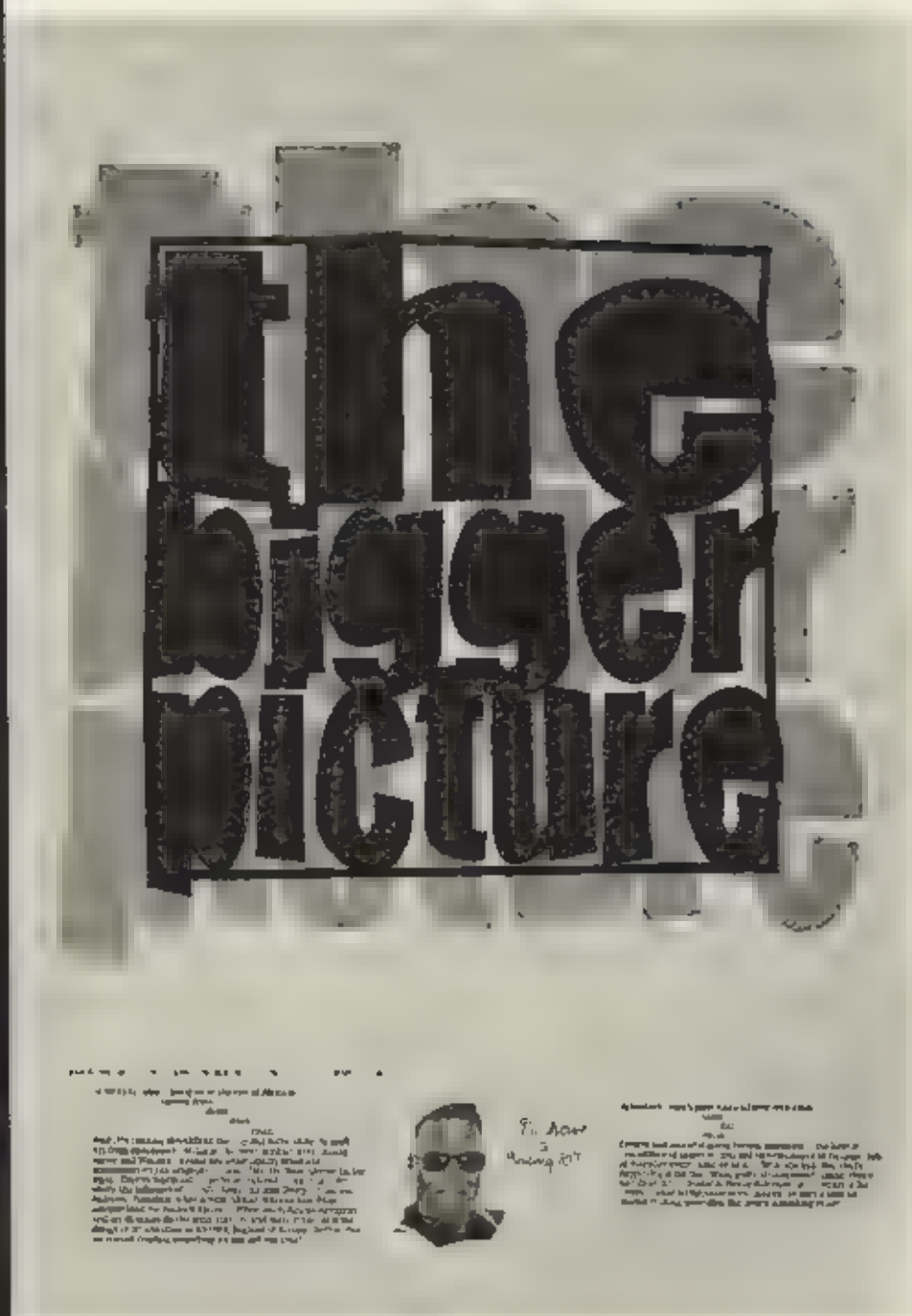
Furthering the cause of graphic designers as initiators, an exhibition of self-authored graphic design will be held at Northern Kentucky University, in Highland Heights, Kentucky, February 8 - March 8, 1996. Designer as Author: Voices and Visions will be curated by associate professor Steven McCarthy and assistant professor Cristina de Almeida, instructors in DESIGNER AS AUTHOR: VOICES AND VISIONS, DEPARTMENT OF ART, FAC 312 NUNN DRIVE, NORTHERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY, HIGHLAND HEIGHTS, KY 41099 DEALMEIDA@NKU.EDU OR MCCARTHYS@NKU.EDU NKU's Graphic Design Program. Championing cross-disciplinary influences, non-commercial design endeavors and personal or investigative projects, Voices and Visions is a curated, thematic exhibition as opposed to a juried competition. Its intention is not to exhaust or aggrandize but to introduce and explore. While the issues behind Voices and Visions echo some of the interests of the graduate work of the last twenty years, it is one of the first forums designated exclusively for such projects.

1 This quote may be just a word or two short of accurate I watched the film three times trying to hold the power of the words and imagery while taking notes from the subtitles at the same time The film is a poignant exploration of language, borders and representation

2 I use the word "language" to refer to any system of communication, visual, verbal or otherwise, in much the same way that Barthes' "text" can refer equally to a tome or an event

3 See, for instance, Gérard Mermoz, "Masks on Hire In Search of Typographic Histories," *Visible Language*, 28 3

4 Of course there are many others, these are just the most widely published Also, I am not concerned here with one of a-kind artists' books

Utopia

i-juse

To further underline guest-editor Anne Burdick's observations of the ever-expanding "roles, responsibilities and possibilities for graphic design" (Center spread) shown here are two recent projects received by Emigre that subvert the traditional status of graphic designers.

i-juse is a journal published periodically by Orange Juice Design. To the best of the producer's knowledge it is the first and only publication of any kind to show how ordinary South Africans use graphic design and advertising in their everyday lives. Writes Garth Walker, co-editor and designer of *i-juse* "Orange Juice Design is determined to promote 'local is lekker' ('local is nice' — an Afrikaans expression common in South Africa) and welcome the day when South African graphic design is copied by Europeans and Americans. We can then at last be recognized for what we are — a truly creative powerhouse. In the spirit of this mission, I have for some time been building a collection of authentic indigenous Zulu, Xhosa and Ndebeli tribal graphic icons based on beaded, carved and decorative material as worn by these people. Little today remains of this rich heritage and it is proving to be a gold mine of Afrocentric design material for the process of creating a new visual language common to all South Africans. This same process will be the chief aim of *i-juse* and the issues that follow."

For information contact: ORANGE JUICE DESIGN, P.O. BOX 51289, MUSGRAVE ROAD, DURBAN 4062, SOUTH AFRICA

According to its publisher, *Utopia* is a "French typographic style exercise based on intuition and perhaps even Utopia." *Utopia* is in search of a universal typographic style where language and writing will no longer present barriers. Published singlehandedly by Paris-based Gilles Poplin *Utopia* helps us imagine how ideograms drawn from Latin, Arabic, Cyrillic and Oriental alphabets might evoke universal concepts such as unity, difference, tolerance, brotherhood and freedom.

For information contact: GILLES POPLIN, 29, BOULEVARD EDGAR QUINET, 75014 PARIS, FRANCE.

D e a r   E m i g r e ,

Well, well, well. Last week I read Professor Blauvelt's letter in the copy you sent me (#35, I think; I gave it away). In response, I originally wrote a very long, articulate, and boring explanation of how I thought you should proceed editorially. Then I said to myself: "Screw it, if *Emigre* doesn't have the wit and good sense to recognize fatuous drivel, I'll send you a nasty, fatuous, drivel-filled letter to respond to Lail's drivel, Prof. B's drivel, and any other nasty drivel that was sloshing around." So, I trashed the first letter, then wrote you a real nasty one. No profanity, but it had some real choice, juicy swipes at numerous fatuous, driveling, self-serving, semiotically in-bred, tunnel-visioned, blinkered, Philistine, etc., etc., blah, blah and more blah. But

So what?

that one's going in the trash too. Why? because I was working on a job today, using one of your fonts, and it's an awesome piece of work. There's lots of fine designers out there who've done some nice new font design, but I think Template [Gothic] is sooooooo gorgeous. You've got others I think are at least the equal of it, and if I had the money I'd buy almost every one of your designs.

If your periodical were anywhere near the piece of work that your fonts are, I'd buy a lifetime subscription. But, with a few exceptions, I find your publication kind of a waste of time. I read it, put it down, and shrug "So what?" I'm not reading anything that hasn't been said better somewhere else. So, I'll go somewhere else to read it. Blauvelt and Lail and whoever else want to take cheap shots at me because they don't understand the difference between critical study and personal criticism; fine. Write it. Print it. Yell it. Scream it. It makes no difference to me. According to my criteria, insults don't equal insight.

As far as Professor Blauvelt's essays and interviews go: You want to print his writing; I don't want to read it. Sounds simple enough to me. (Dare I say the word "common?") Save yourself the money; don't send me any more copies, free or not. If I see one I like, I'll buy it. You'll hear from me the next time I have the money to buy another font (Matrix and Keedy are next on my shopping list.).

P a t   W a t s o n ,   Truckee, California

P.S.: I saw your poster at the SFMOMA; it's gorgeous Congratulations

D e a r   E m i g r e ,

I just wanted to share my thoughts on *Emigre* and the several changes that are occurring within it. I am a fairly new subscriber of this great magazine (having discovered it last year), yet in such a short amount of time it has helped me shape my interests, career and future.

My first two issues were the *Designers Republic* and the *New Faces* ones. Since then, I have bought several more of the big size. My first subscriber issue was the first small size issue, much to my dismay. Not because of change in size (which I think is irrelevant), but because of the change in content. I really missed the interviews. I didn't find the essays "compelling enough" (to paraphrase Marcia Clark).

Then *Rebirth* [*Emigre* 34] happened.

This issue was great. Content, visuals, et all (RADICAL COMMODITIES excelled). I have just received issue number 3 of the nu-*Emigre* (aka *Mouthpiece*) and have found it excellent, too. You are not losing ground. Have you seen the repercussions the essays are creating? The arguments for and against? The discussions? Finally, graphic designers are talking. And in a loud voice.

E-mail: gaston@yago.satlink.net, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Not losing ground

Hope

D e a r   E m i g r e ,

Re: Lorraine Wild's hope that "*Emigre's* shrinking page size will inspire more rigorous editing and spare us this useless 'discourse'." In the spirit of a famous quote by Mickey Mantle about Casey Stengel, I would like to say that my views are about the same as Michael Bierut's (which are underlined in *Emigre* #35, above the display size type that says "Can't-fail sleeping aid," five pages past the centerfold, starting in the first column).

M a r a   K u r t z ,   Vice President, Type Directors Club, New York.

D e a r   E m i g r e ,

I enjoy being on *Emigre's* mailing list even though I don't presently have enough HD storage to make use of your stuff, and also I don't run Windows yet. I am a writer of words, and I have become accustomed to command-driven WordPerfect. I hate graphic interfaces, icons, whatever you call it. I even took my command line off my screen — when I need it I just type Alt Big deal. I keep my hands on the keyboard. Everything in WordPerfect is just a couple of strokes, even changing fonts. Why does the public think it has to have these stupid icons for the simplest of tasks?

I like what you have done with Modula Round Sans. So you noticed people were removing the diagonal serifs? I wonder why. They were ugly, that's why. Not so much in 12 point where you feel 'em more than actually see them. But in anything much bigger they were horrible.

I enjoy the little conceptual riffs, too. I never went to design school, but I can follow along. Plus, I took print shop 35 years ago in high school, so I know what ems and ens are, and what the old type cases looked like, and I was pretty good at grabbing type, knowing where the letters were without looking. I like to write with broad pens, ## Little conceptual riffs

too. You can see that for a dumb non-art-school kind of guy I have, perhaps, a certain feeling for type. For example, when writing to friends I go into this Courier font to give my letters a more typewritten, less Helvetica word-processed look.

Playing around with type is fun, but only if you have some grounding in the classical principles. It's far too easy for the average schmuck to dig into his ready-made library of grotesque, mutually incompatible fonts and throw them around like a monkey with a pile of shit.

I like the Triplex on the Modula poster. Beautiful space between the letters and between the lines.

J o n a t h a n   G o r d o n ,   West Hollywood, CA

D e a r   E m i g r e ,

The tests results are in: Nothing rips quite as hard as DOGMA! I guess that I haven't been paying much attention lately!

J D ,   antenna@inch.com

D e a r   E m i g r e ,

As a member of NDC (Nucleo de Design de Campinas), and in association with ADG (Associacao dos Designers Graficos) in Brazil, I want to congratulate your magazine and products. You guys are really the vanguard of the vanguard! Keep up the amazing work.

Best regards,

R a f a e l   F e r r e i r a ,   Bac Propaganda, Brazil

Join the Dialogue: *Mail*
Emigre, 4475 D Street, Sacramento, CA 95819 USA

Avaiiilllable

Dear Emigre,

One hates to be picky. Well, actually one doesn't hate to be picky. But in the good days, when type was generally set by typographers — I mean as far back as 1984 — proofreading was considered to be part of the typesetting process. One of the main victims of the desktop revolution with in-house typesetting has been the humble proofreader. By gum, you can use SpelChek! As if careful human beings should trust a spelling routine whose name is spelled phonetically. So, major advertising agencies — at least here in Detroit, but I suspect elsewhere as well — hire 50 or 60 desktoppers, buy some Macs, some programs, some typefaces and immediately layoff the proofreader. As my nine year old says, "Go figure." While desktopping may lead to a certain creative freedom for a few individuals, generally (at least in my observation) it is inefficient and conducted with an arrogance that derives directly from the amateur status of most — not many, most — of those engaged in it. Perhaps I say this because I am a supervisor at a type/graphics shop that has, over the years, gone from hot metal to photo to digital to Mac and I miss the good old days. But quite possibly I am saying this because it's true. QuarkXPress, for in-stance, is almost as good as an old VIP photo system as a typesetting engine (if you subtract away the ability to handle art). And none of the Xtensions designed to do charts and tabular matter are one-tenth as good as Magna (a proprietary CORA language system).

Anyway, it strikes me that before such firms as Emigre make high-handed artistic statements and pronouncements, they should get the basics right. Like checking one's typing. (Admit it: sometimes you guys sound a lot like Italian Modernists who thought World War One was "cleansing" and that Mussolini was a cool guy!)

On the other hand, most of your faces are extremely well designed, although when we went looking for Modula for Cadillac a few years ago, I could have killed the namer of that font, inasmuch as there was already a Modula on the market, an old Lino face, of a completely different drawing. I do appreciate your work, especially after having done three faces myself (a special face for Chrysler, a redo of Novel Gothic Medium — an old Headliners face — and something we call Bookstore Normal created for Borders Bookstores). However, in the future please proofread material you plan to send me. Incidentally, some of your kerning combinations are pretty bad and punctuation marks often look like afterthoughts.

Sincerely,

Floyd Opperman, Farmington, MI

Dear Emigre,

There was a time, about a year ago, when Weingart came to this institution to teach (for the past three years at the Maine Summer Institute in Graphic Design) and he would use the words "Emigre garbage" when talking about typography. Back then I agreed with him, for the most part anyway. Then I read *Graphic Design*

Realize
into the Digital Realm. It really made me realize what was going on with Emigre. Thank you for the pleasure of reading that book; it was truly inspiring.

Thanks,

Jamie Peloquin, Graphic Design Dept., Maine College of Art

Dear Emigre,

Emigre's move to include more critical writing reflects editor Rudy VanderLans' desire to continue developing the role his magazine occupies in graphic design. Over the years, the work that has appeared in its pages has come to represent individuals who push the envelope of design, individuals who set a high standard for themselves and their work. With this move, VanderLans must now define what standards of discourse are appropriate for *Emigre*. Two recent examples where the level of discourse is unclear are Rudy VanderLans' RADICAL COMMODITIES and Jeffery Keedy's ZOMBIE MODERNISM

Must define
(*Emigre* #35). Suffering from implied messages and avoiding of actual criticism, both articles fail to achieve the high standards of discourse appropriate for *Emigre*. Jeffery Keedy's strong assertion concerning the pitfalls of "Zombie Modernism" are useless unless he defines exactly whom he is talking about. While modernism may be a dead-end in Keedy's opinion, for a large number of graphic designers whose jobs are simply a way of making a living and have no desire to pursue alternative theoretical approaches, modernism is a quick means to an end. Practitioners of this style default to modernism because of the safe, quick fix that it can supply. I have to assume that Keedy's "Zombie Modernists" are actually the influential/ more visible designers who practice modernism with a vengeance. Their belief in modernism is one that attempts to downplay the importance of postmodernism, halts its progress and development while also underhandedly appropriating from it. The design field is comprised of a very diverse group of people, each having different motivations and aspirations, so to lump all modernists under one heading — "Zombie" — is just as bad as the error-filled, arrogant modernists' generalizations.

RADICAL COMMODITIES also reflected a lack of definition when Rudy VanderLans stated, in reference to the success of Template Gothic, "And to say that it is used everywhere simply because it's currently the cool font is discounting the fact that perhaps it has certain universal qualities that foster its widespread use, which is usually seen as a great asset in a typeface." A statement such as this is far too broad and affords many of the users with more credibility than they deserve.

In order to be effective, the discussion must be separated into two parts; use and merit. In both cases, one factor can, but doesn't necessarily have to influence the other. When making statements such as this, it would be foolish to ignore the fact that a large number of designers using Template Gothic do so because they believe it carries with it an intrinsic coding that will somehow empower their work. In this case, VanderLans' "focussing on the positive" can easily become avoidance. The pointed/mean-spirited attacks by designers such as Paul Rand or Massimo Vignelli do no good, however. A mature critical dialog — either positive or negative — can only help advance future discourse within design. And, in order for design to understand and define itself, there must be critics who are not afraid to take a stand. Implied messages found throughout each article also affect their value. For example, Keedy's apparent insecurities with American politics has led him to make two crucial errors. One, modernism/postmodernism should not be grouped with any one political party (if any at all). Two, he should make points using examples of designers rather than political figures, such as Newt Gingrich and Rush Limbaugh, both of whom have no bearing on design whatsoever. Obviously there is something greater bothering Keedy and in the future he should attempt to name

names (of designers) rather than beat around the bush with tough talk from the safe confines of his living room.

After the ground work was laid by discussing Henry Rollins in RADICAL COMMODITIES, I have to wonder if VanderLans is planning to do a Macintosh Powerbook ad. And if so, why does he care what his readers think? If we think he's a sell-out, well that's our problem. I understand the use of Rollins for a parallel, but this example strays from the point. I believe the point VanderLans was attempting to make was that with a little hard work, a person can make things happen and how people perceive such a person may not not necessarily be based upon all the facts.

One issue that piqued my interest but didn't fit into a larger context until reading the preceding articles appeared some

Confusing enough

months ago in the pages of *Emigre*. Another undefined critique occurred when VanderLans attacked the design of the *AIGA* logo and *Print* magazine in order to undermine/reroute the discussions focussing on what some critics describe as "ugly" (*Emigre* 30). This is absurd. I cannot recall anyone stating that the *AIGA* logo was good. Furthermore, CULT OF THE UGLY and related critiques were not about the *AIGA* logo. Just because the logo of a journal with which Heller and other critics are associated is marred by poor design doesn't in any way diminish their abilities as critics. Heller defined who and what he is — a critic (paraphrasing *Emigre* 30), so VanderLans' response to CULT OF THE UGLY should have been approached from this direction rather than by criticizing the *AIGA* logo or *Print* magazine. It is fine and good to "turn the tables," but once again, this can become avoidance. Through their writings and work, both VanderLans and Keedy have offered immeasurable contributions to the field of graphic design. However, the writers effectively remove themselves from strong positions of authority/influence when their work gets bogged down with undefined/implied messages. I'm not saying that either author has to undertake a massive offensive or write formal theoretical dissertations. Rather, if they define their position and who they are talking about while citing non-related subjects sparingly, their articles and the critical writing emerging from *Emigre* will be stronger as a whole. When definition of a subject is through examples and the examples are as free-wheeling as Rollins, Gingrich and Limbaugh, the final essay leaves the reader in no better position than prior to the reading. Leave politics and Rollins out of the design picture; it's confusing enough.

Mike Kippenhan, El Rancho Starvo Design

Dear Readers,

It is so very tempting to respond to each and every letter sent in recently. The number of criticisms in response to the past three issues, however, has been overwhelming, forcing me to pick and choose and respond to the issues that I care most about.

One issue that intrigues me to no end is brought up in the above letter by Mike Kippenhan in regards to my Template Gothic statement in the RADICAL COMMODITIES article in *Emigre* 34. Kippenhan suggests it "reflected a lack of definition," so I'll attempt to expand.

Barry Deck, the designer of Template Gothic, gave us the following insight of his intentions in an interview in *Emigre* 15; "I was trying to do two things with that typeface. One, I was trying to make it look somewhat as if it was drawn with a lettering template but then I also wanted it to look as if it had been reproduced inconsistently." These are two distinctly different ideas that are worked into the typeface, providing it

with characteristics that leave room for a variety of interpretations. The way the font is used also impacts how it will be perceived, which then increases its potential for future use. For instance, people who saw Template Gothic first used in *Surfer* magazine might forever associate it with surfing. It's no stretch to see the smoothly rounded shapes of Template Gothic as derived from a surf board. When successfully used in text, set flush left, ragged right, it will again influence how people may use it next, each

Faddish

time subverting its "intrinsic coding." In the end, the only thing inherent to Template Gothic might be the numerous narratives that it inspires.

I am convinced that Template Gothic is used for a wide variety of reasons, not only because it is a currently "cool" font, although that is one more reason why some designers use it. The desktop publisher who buys a package of hundreds of typefaces for $29.95 containing a bootleg copy of Template Gothic and who hasn't read Barry Deck's or Edward Fella's or Ellen Lupton's writings on Template Gothic, is attracted to it for very different reasons than Gips Balkind. The fact that both parties feel compelled to use it, I feel, is to the credit of the typeface. I don't see how this automatically, as Kippenhan suggests, "affords many of the users with more credibility than they deserve."

Finally, now that Template Gothic has been around for over five years, I'm curious to find out at what point its usage would be considered "appropriate" as opposed to faddish.

Rudy VanderLans, Berkeley, California

Lastly, we feel great sadness to learn that, on July 6, Dan Friedman passed away. I met him once on a Sunday sometime in the late eighties He was visiting California and stopped by our studio just to say hello I remember how nervous I was, since to me, Friedman was like a giant — one of those mythical personas of American design of whose work I had pictures engraved in my mind While working within the philosophical frame of modernism Friedman's work opened up avenues that seemed non-existent before, and I was one of many young designers shamelessly trying to copy it His passing away is a great loss for the design community. I'm proud to have met him and this giant was one cool guy. R.V.D L.
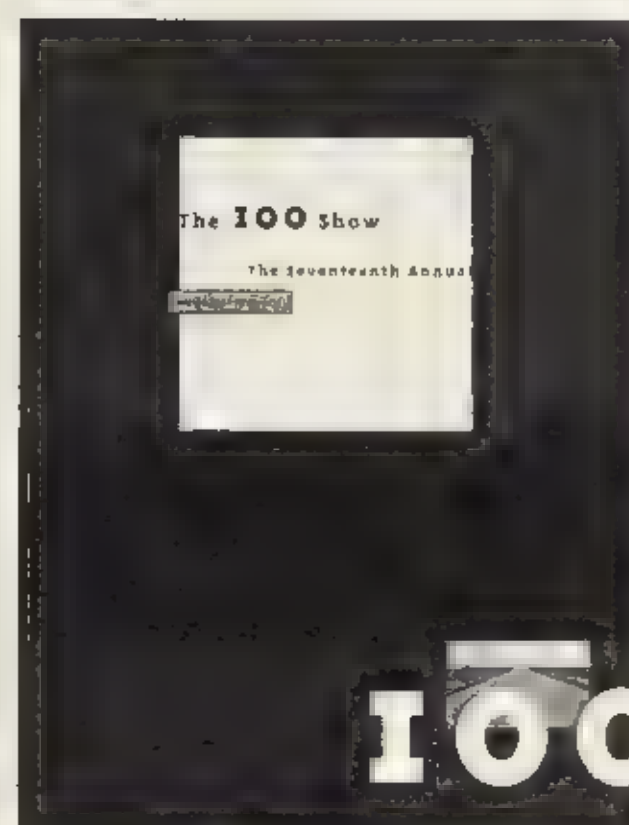
The 100 Show: The Seventeenth Annual of the American Center for Design.

The 100 Show design competition is widely considered to be one of the most rigorous communication design competitions. Under an innovative curatorial format, each juror selects work into the show independently of the other jurors.
The Seventeenth Annual 100 Show was chaired by Rick Poynor; the jury consisted of Stephen Doyle, Laurie Haycock Makela and Rudy VanderLans.
The book features full color reproductions of the selected work, extensive commentary about each piece by its designer and the juror who selected it, and a review of work from other design disciplines. This edition of *The 100 Show* book was designed by Emigre.
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Twentieth-
century technology
has created what many
sociologists view as the decline
of the close-knit, regional community.
The international reach of trade, trans-
portation and mass media networks has pen-
etrated the boundaries and dispersed the mem-
berships of the tribes, villages and neighborhoods that were
once the models of community life. Modern technology has threat-
ened to bring about, instead, an ostensibly homogenous "global
community," a world-wide tribe connected and depersonalized by a
common culture of information. But people continue to crave the
sense of collaboration that they derive from identifying with others who
share their ideological concerns. As more of the world's population
becomes literate and access to publishing reaches a wider range of
socioeconomic classes, the people within them assemble their own
transregional communities through the spaces of the printed page.

W R I T I N G

The act of reading may be a solitary diversion, if not a refuge, but it is an
unmistakably public experience. The ability to read enables the reader to
sample, share and identify with the writings of diverse communities and to
formulate his or her own "social heritage."[1] Readers are congregating
into "reading communities" of people who share an ideological interest
and who confederate to emphasize their uniqueness as a group.
Broader in scope, yet more narrowly defined than a typical regional
community, the boundaries of a reading community are coterminous
with the distribution of its representative media. An individual can
simultaneously identify, for example, with a community of envi-
ronmental activists (*World Watch*), a community of hip-hop
enthusiasts (*The Source*) and a community of German expa-
triates (*Die Zeit*). Because the physical setting in which
one reads is characteristically private, the same indi-
vidual is also likely to develop a significant rapport
with a collective of "imagined" individuals,
envisioning who is either included or
excluded from membership.[2]

S T U A R T

AND C O M M U N I T Y

Through the social space of the page, reading communities accomplish many of the same goals that regional communities achieve within a public setting: their members interact with one another, instigate and develop community values and evaluate their colleagues. Those who represent the community as writers articulate their personal vision, symbolizing the identity of the reading group for the mass of society. A group's writers can readily manipulate the group's representation, playing down or reinforcing their differences as necessary.

When a community constructs an identity through written language that is reinforced through its media, the public will come to view it as a *symbolic* community.[3] Many communities signify their territory through symbolic traditions, including the places they inhabit, the commodities they produce and consume, the clothing they wear and the make-up, tattooing, or circumcision with which they adorn their bodies. Many of today's most familiar communities have highly symbolic media profiles. Groups united by ethnicity, nationality, gender or sexuality, activism and professional affiliation identify themselves through their newsletters, magazines or academic journals, for which subscription becomes a "mappable" form of membership.

MCKEE

Wirth, Louis, "The Scope and Problems of the Community," in *Community Life and Social Policy* (Chicago University of Chicago Press, 1956), p.11

2
Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined Communities* (London and New York Verso, 1991), p.6

3
See Cohen, Anthony P *The Symbolic Construction of Community* (London and New York Routledge 1985)

4
Gumperz, J. "The Speech Community." in Language and Social Context Pier Paolo Giglioli, ed. (London: Penguin, 1972), p 219

5
McLuhan Marshall *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (Toronto. The University of Toronto Press. 1962)

6
Imagined Communities. p 44

7
Fishman, J A. "The Sociology of Language." in *Language and Social Context*, pp 45-46.

8
For numerous examples, see Fowler R et al. *Language and Control*

From the time of its introduction centuries ago, print promoted the spread of "nationalist" languages, or those language varieties that came to be defended as the endemic language of a nation.[5] Benedict Anderson, in his writings on the formation of modern nations, notes that print languages can be accepted and used by a much larger community than any individual spoken vernacular: "Speakers of the huge variety of Frenches, Englishes or Spanishes, who might find it difficult or even impossible to understand one another in conversation, became capable of comprehending one another via print and paper."[6]

LANGUAGE

The specific dialect that a community adopts within its speech and its publishing reveals much about the group's cultural and political position in society. Any individual language, such as English, has countless community variations known as *vernaculars*. A "speech community" consists of individuals who share a common vernacular and who have developed independent standards regarding the ways in which they use it. In his essay entitled, "The Speech Community." the linguist John Gumperz describes the infinite variety of groups that can be identified as speech communities: "Most groups of any permanence, be they small bands bounded by face-to-face contact, modern nations divisible into smaller subregions, or even occupational associations or neighborhood gangs, may be treated as speech communities, provided they show linguistic peculiarities that warrant special study."[4] Such verbal "peculiarities" are shaped by the community members' social interactions and the diverse contexts in which their interactions occur. The "English-speaking" residents of any large urban area will actually shift gears many times a day and speak in a compelling variety of community vernaculars.

Throughout the history of print, whichever dialect figured most prominently in a society's written media became that society's institutionalized, or *standard*, language. The American variety of "Standard English" is thus the dialect that predominates within the American publishing industry, and those who share it form a linguistically-governed reading community.

Differences between dialects can be further accentuated by their physical form, which amplifies the symbolic dimension of print through the language of design. The belief that the standardized presentation of a message can have equal validity for all audiences is continually exemplified within the design of many municipal sign systems. A typical regulatory sign — KEEP OUT GOVERNMENT PROPERTY, or NO PARKING TOW AWAY ZONE — displays a declarative tone, an austere typographic composition and an industrial structure that evokes an anodyne authority. Such signs are written to address, and order, a large and diverse public, yet they typically incorporate language that is foreign to the speech of the streets. It is possible to conceive of such uniform(ed) messages as having no particular audience. A vast majority of the materials published by our prominent social institutions exhibit a similar belief in *objectivity* and *universality*, a denial that writing is a cultural activity shaped by community standards.

Signs created within a commu-
nity, on the other hand, establish a record of that
community's position in society. Typography "vernacular-
izes" the printed word, fusing a community's experience,
tradition and values into its communications. Displaying
popular vocabularies and visual idiosyncrasies, each com-
munity sign — THE RELIGIOUS RIGHT IS DEAD WRONG or SWEET
WHITE CORN 3 FOR $.99 — contributes to the body of a com-
munity's typographic output, forming their print identity for
the rest of society. People believe the codes in regulatory
signage only because they have been conditioned to believe
that such a presentation represents *authority*. People believe
community messages because they trust in their *authenticity*.

VARIETY AND COMMUNITY

A community can be recognized by the repetitive aspects of
its print culture that signify the community's own identifying
standards. Communities publicize their identity *directly*
through the content of the ephemera that they produce
and *indirectly* through the qualitative print standards they
adopt, the production methods that they employ, the
design vocabulary they use and the way in which they dis-
seminate their media to an outside audience. It is thus
impossible to speak of typographic conventions without
conjuring up a print community that subscribes to them.

A community's print language can evolve organically from
within its visual tradition or it can be contrived by *insiders*
or *outsiders* as the need arises. Even the visual languages
that attempt to embody a country's "national" culture are
highly circulated vernacular fabrications. Print designers
who develop the graphic ideology of products like political
candidates, national newspapers, or national brand-name
products attempt to capture some overriding patriotic
sensibility and to avoid evidence of any regional symbolism.

Depending on the audience they intend to attract, communi-
ties may find it beneficial to alternate between the use of
standardized and idiomatic language or design models.
Most urban communities will, by necessity, represent their
community with a wider range of typographic lan-
guages than would a similar group living within a
region that is less
diverse demographically.
Public announcements that need
to speak across community boundaries,
such as posters advertising "safe-sex" prac-
tices, are frequently created by a collective of
graphic advisors, each of whom possesses inside
knowledge of the targeted community's vernacular:
SAFE SEX IS HOT SEX vs. INTERCOURSE WITHOUT A CONDOM MAY
KILL YOU. In fact, the more restricted a community's
typographic latitude is, the more likely that community
will view other presentations as imposing, if not invasive.

A group's political status is strongly influenced by the com-
petence with which its members use the standard language,
in speech or in writing. Standard languages are typically
upheld by a society's power elite as the most distinguished
and correct dialect used within that society. In many coun-
tries throughout the world, communities have intentionally
made their vernacular languages more accessible in order to
standardize them, garnering status for themselves as their
country's most politically-authoritative cultural group. The
sociolinguistic scholar J.A. Fishman has noted that "Swahili,
Filipino, Indonesian, Malay and the various provincial lan-
guages of India are all being consciously expanded in
vocabulary [and] standardized in spelling and gram-
mar so that they can increasingly function as the exclu-
sive languages of government, and of higher culture
and technology."[7] Any individual who chooses to
speak or write using a standardized form of lan-
guage as opposed to a vernacular form, such as
commonly occurs during a job interview or
within a courtroom, is attempting to ele-
vate his or her social standing by con-
cealing his or her community
membership.[8]

To prepare a text for publication within the complicated framework of the publishing industry, a writer must have extensive knowledge of the nuances of grammar, syntax and spelling, and be able to combine his or her words in an articulate, if not eloquent fashion. The ability to publish a text also requires access to and familiarity with some technology of language reproduction. Traditional publishing requires a network of professionals with various areas of specialization – the publisher, the editor, the graphic designer and the printer, to name a few. Throughout the history of communication, the more complex a system of writing is, the more likely it is to produce a distinct class of practitioners who exercise what is called "language authority."

WRITING AND THE G

The graphic design community is a contemporary manifestation of the "scribal elite," a specialized class whose members view themselves as superior manipulators of language. "High" graphic design is available only by acquiring the services of a graphic design "professional" who has gained his or her expertise through either a lengthy apprenticeship or a costly investment in college-level skill development. In "The Ethnography of Literacy," John Szwed notes that "It is a mark of success (in most businesses) *not* to be directly responsible for one's own communications in written form – secretaries are employed to turn oral standards into acceptable written ones. (In this, the United States resembles other non-western cultures of the world, some of which measure the importance of messages and their senders by the number of intermediaries involved in their transmission.]"[9]

9
Szwed, John F. "The Ethnography of Literacy," in Writing: The Nature, Development and Teaching of Written Communication Vol 1 (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1981). pp. 19-20.

10
Richard Lanham, who is not a typographer by trade, expresses the threat to the collective integrity of the graphic design profession as he emphatically relates his discovery (and the demystification) of the typographic process in his book The Electronic Word: "I can reformat prose into poetry I can illuminate my manuscript in ways that would make a medieval scribe weep with envy. And when I have finished, I can print it out on a Linotronic 300 electronic typesetter by pushing a keystroke or two. And so can you, as an electronic reader, do all these things, whatever I have chosen to do." (emphasis added)

11
Larson, Magali Sarfatti, The Rise of Professionalism: A Sociological Analysis (Berkeley and Los Angeles: The University of California Press, 1977), p xii.

12
See, for example Bartholomae, David. "Inventing the University" in Perspectives on Literacy, Eugene R. Kintgen, Barry M Kroll and Mike Rose, eds., 1988.

13
The Rise of Professionalism: A Sociological Analysis, p. xii

Recent advances in reproductive technology, including the photocopying machine and the personal computer, have brought typographic practice into a greater portion of the "lay" public's day-to-day cultural experience.[10] Almost every public arena is filled with a new generation of homemade typographic messages. As a result the fluctuating status of the professional graphic designer is at the crux of much of the commentary appearing within the graphic design media. Designers are evidently scrambling to establish their primacy over a quickly expanding community of desktop publishers, putting into practice one of the most valued applications of the written word: cultural testimony.

elevate design discourse beyond the reading interests of the average desktop publisher. Magali Sarfatti Larson has identified "the production of knowledge" as a common and potentially potent strategy for any profession wishing to gain autonomy. If a professional group can succeed in formulating a distinctive body of knowledge, Larson observes, they can win control of their working conditions by defining the standards by which society judges them.[11]

RAPHIC DESIGN COMMUNITY

Because writing is synonymous with documentation, communities that lack "signature" writers or publications run the risk of cultural invisibility. Publishing enables communities to develop and disseminate their own histories by establishing a sense of continuity with past societies. Graphic designers are under pressure to publish because they constitute a new, unfamiliar community without a widely-publicized history. Their identity depends on their status as an authentic profession, a position that would be difficult to defend without the evidence of a collective body of literature. The design press has recently included academic writing to help shift the basis of the profession away from discussions of client-dominated practice and to

To accentuate their autonomous voice, professional communities promote certain analytical methods, ideological frames, and terminology that they either fabricate for themselves or appropriate from other disciplines.[12] Such groups become "discourse communities," allowing each group member to relate to the same coded jargon, using esoteric words and phrases that operate in a manner similar to street slang, subcultural "passwords" and shoptalk. Reading, as a test of knowledge and inside information, becomes a necessary hurdle to win socialization within a community.

THE SOCIAL CRI

Histories of visual communication, as fashioned by the graphic design community, have focused on the merits of prominent artisans or corporate designers, and have tended to exclude the output of the language specialists that work within a wide range of socioeconomic classes. Within design education, a professor or instructor may not accept the design experience that students have gained in other community contexts. Certainly, an individual's design sensibility is informed by his or her life experiences and can reflect the variety of print communities within which he or she has been socialized. Even when course instruction includes discussion of the vernacular, there is little evidence that students are encouraged to work outward from their own vernaculars, rather than by the instructor's imposition of the professional community's standards. The critique of the study of print vernaculars as a worthless indulgence in past fashion is limited and misinformed. The vernacular is not a "historical" affectation that can only be abused — it is the idiomatic language, whether typographic or chirographic, that every individual uses in the present as part of the group with which they identify.

To win recognition beyond the professional community, graphic designers must convince their clientele that they can successfully target a community of readers, and demonstrate fluency with a variety of print vernaculars. A particular level of graphic competence is an established criteria for presentation within many public networks, from magazines that control the quality of their advertisements to store signs that signify the boundaries of an exclusive shopping district. Communities that cannot meet the stringent design and production requirements of these or the many other tacitly regulated posting places must seek the services of an "outside" graphic designer. In the eyes of their clientele, the success of a graphic designer depends on how well he or she can transform a community's writings into an accurately positioned product. By the standards of the professional community, the graphic designer will achieve the most recognition if he or she can uphold that same artifact as a print "milestone."

Eliot Friedson, in his evaluation of the medical profession, distinguishes a profession from other occupations in that professions have established control of their own work. "Only the professional has the recognized right to declare . . . 'outside' evaluation to be illegitimate and intolerable."[13] By publishing design annuals featuring award-winning graphics, design becomes a form of writing that represents the shared culture and territory of the professional graphic design community — not the community for whom it was created. Such writing becomes the standard language of graphic design, mapping the boundaries of the graphic design community for the general public and denying less "distinguished" designers equal professional status. Graphic design might be better judged in its social context, within the boundaries of the community in which it was designed to reside. Graphic design can then move away from its limited value as an object of discovery for other graphic designers and become a tool for the discovery of a community's social practices.

Kundera, Milan, The Art of the Novel, New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1986, p127. / Pagels, Heinz R, "Uncertainty and Complementarity," The World Treasury of Physics, Astronomy, and Mathematics, Ed. Timothy Ferris, Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1991, p.103. / Bronowski, Jacob, The Origins of Knowledge and Imagination, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978, p.83. / Cup A Joe, Raleigh, NC, On the wall of the restroom in the coffee house, 1995. / Derrida, Jaques, Lecture at Duke University, Durham, NC, 1994. / Eliot, T. S, "Introduction," The Art of Poetry by Paul Valéry, New York: Pantheon Books, 1958, xiv. / Bronowski, Jacob, Science and Human Values, New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1956, p. 51. / Beuys, Joseph, catalogue. "Joseph Beuys: Drawings, Objects and Prints" Institute for Foreign Cultural Affairs, Grey Art Center, ECSU, 1995, p. 9. / Koonts, Lisa, table coffe talk.

table   coffee   talk

My friends and I sit in the coffee house. We are only sometimes aware that our coffee is a seething mass of brownian motion, sometimes aware that the coffee cups are chaotic, yet still hold together and contain the coffee. We meet at a table, we talk, we pull out our ideas and examine them while not immersed, embroiled in the act of making design, art, music, writing, whatever.

Coffee, we all need more coffee. People walk by and say hello. Sit down and join us. Time is different for each of us relative to the speed of light, according to the theory of relativity. The difference is so slight that we decide to act as if time is constant. And so we agree to meet at 10am on Friday.

Our day doesn't officially begin until we read our horoscopes. This is my own concept of time, ritual, constructed reality. Am I really in a leaky boat and will not make it to where I am going? Newtonian physics explains only one small framework of reality, but that does not keep us from using it in our lives. In the same manner, graphic designers break down form into scale, type style, contrast and color to communicate to an observer that John Smith is speaking at 5pm at Memorial Auditorium

The words we use to talk about our work do not adequately describe the process or product of graphic design. This does not keep us from using this particular language in our making and critiquing of work. Terms do not define graphic design any more than the theory of Newtonian physics or the daily horoscope define our world.

Double latte, espresso, cinnamon and vanilla coffee wafts around our table. Words such as form, content, type, image, size, shape, style, substance, contrast, color, hue, intensity, hierarchy, space, modern, postmodern set the terms and define a working model. Conversation about graphic design using only this tool set of terms is often insular, limiting the imagining in the process of creating.

Coffee is water filtered through ground-up beans. An artist/writer friend, returning with another refill, reminds us that "A novel is often ...nothing but a long quest for some elusive definitions." Are these discussions a continuous search for some essential something? Words swirl around me, and I think that my coffee does not taste its definition.

The limitations of language concerned physicist Neils Bohr: "It is wrong to think that the task of physics is to find out how nature IS. Physics concerns what we can say about Nature." Speaking theoretically about graphic design concerns what we can say about graphic design.

We need more coffee. We hear snatches of dialogue from a few tables down. We talk about design. In the process, we create a language for talking about design. Bronowski says, "To use the phrase, 'the statement is' at once puts you into a universe of discourse in which you are no longer using this language to describe things but statements about things."
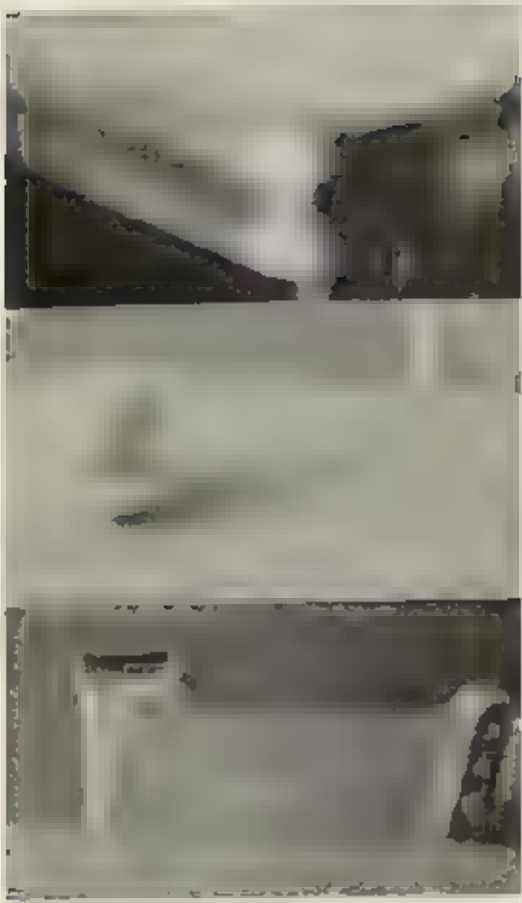
With language, we are creating a conversation in the same way we create design itself. When talking about anything, choices are made, limits are set, specific words are spoken and meaning is constructed. Definition is a word house that cannot house all meaning.

Visiting the ladies room, I want to rejoin the conversation. I have to "please hold down handle until toilet flushes thanks." So, what is the conversation I am rejoining really about anyway? Philosopher Jacques Derrida talks about the undefinable in a 1994 lecture at Duke University: "If it exists, it corresponds to name. If it is essence, this thing defies semantics, psychology, philosophy. *It is invisible,* cannot be seen when one speaks of it, but it has been seen." So essences, ideas are difficult to hold in the container of language. What about this table? Surely we can define "table." We sit at this table and yet do not see the "table" in the same way. This thing, this structure, is it an arena for discussion or a grandmother kitchen yellow formica table? Our cups sit on its surface, gravity is all around us. Those coffee spillers among us experiment with gravity quite frequently.

Conversation about process becomes insular and circular when relying on a formal design vocabulary. We appropriate languages, such as literary criticism or physics, in much the same way that graphic designers borrow images and form. This discussion is the place to make new connections between formerly disparate ideas and languages.

Our conversation jumps around, and I wish I could hold it all in my head at once. There's this quote from T. S. Eliot. My poet friend brought it up one night when we were having a trauma about how and why we do our work. "I enjoy and 'understand' a piece of music better for knowing it well simply because I have at any moment during its performance a memory of the part that has preceded and a memory of the part that is still to come. Ideally I should like to be able to hold the whole of a great symphony in my mind at once."

Eliot is talking about music that he is very familiar with, that he likes to listen to over and over. Our conversations repeat, return to our work and splinter in many directions. What do we take for granted as given in our theoretical discussions? What vocabulary forms what we can say or imagine about graphic design? What is the purpose of this conversation anyway?

Our dialogue is a constructed environment of words. Terms alone exist as a structure without an audience, without even ourselves. We play with words, creating meaning. Bronowski says: "In the act of creation, a man brings together two facets of reality and by discovering a likeness between them, suddenly makes them one. This act is the same in Leonardo, in Keats and in Einstein. And the spectator who is moved by the finished work of art or the scientific theory re-lives the same discovery; his appreciation also is a re-creation."

The act of applying varied languages to graphic design generates different ways of seeing and an awareness of how we deal with information as we move between theoretical and applied work. When I apply ideas from physics in a conversation about graphic design, I am making connections between two different subjects, but the ideas do not feel different to me.

There is a rhythm to these smatterings of conversation, to the imagining of ideas. The discussion connects our work to real time. Sometimes we get so involved in the process that we forget to bring our lives into our work. We enjoy this expressive discourse, this traffic of ideas, and its caffeine gives our designing selves energy.

We drink more coffee. Someone has a catalogue from the Joseph Beuys exhibit. Beuys talks about people being too intellectual and too logical. He wants to "break up all the redisua" (not a typo; Bueys makes up words). He wants "to place the resulting fragments in a state of turbulence by a process that produces chaos, for everything new has always emerged from a state of chaos." I notice that my napkin contains more coffee than the cup that is holding it down.

Where are we? What do we take from this smoke-filled room, sounds of other conversations intermittently filling our rare silences, traffic outside the window? More coffee, with cinnamon this time. This is my last cup. Cinnamon flavored conversation, our lives and work are one long attempt at definition. And the coffee, this conversation, held in the cup of our language. A language that somehow holds together and contains the imagining.

ON
TYPOGRAPHIC
REFERENCE

(PART ONE)

Gérard Mermoz

As recent polemics around the new typography show, the criteria used by its detractors tend to be grounded in a few unquestioned assumptions about legibility, transparency and alleged readers' interests. These assumptions, formulated and publicized by Stanley Morison, Beatrice Warde, Emil Ruder, Paul Rand and, more recently, Robin Kinross, have set an agenda for typographic criticism, one that has forced alternative positions to define themselves within that agenda, against norms set by typographic orthodoxy rather than through independent, "organic" theoretical elaborations.

This makes a case for design criticism to shift its focus from abstract design principles (the "isms" of art and design history) to the micro-physics of specific design interventions, taking

First Principles of Typography, 1930   Printing Should Be Invisible," British and Colonial Printer and Stationer, October 16, 1930   Typographie, 1967

A Designer's Art, 1985   Fellow Readers, 1994

WHEN USED IN A CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT, NEW TYPOGRAPHY REFERS TO THE BROAD RANGE OF WORK PRESENTED BY RICK POYNOR IN HIS BOOK TYPOGRAPHY NOW, THE NEXT WAVE, (1991) WHEN USED WITH REFERENCE TO THE TWENTIES AND THIRTIES, IT TRANSLATES THE GERMAN EXPRESSION "NEUE TYPOGRAPHIE," AN ESSAY IN WHICH JAN TSCHICHOLD OUTLINED NEW TYPOGRAPHIC VALUES BASED ON THE FULFILLMENT OF "PRACTICAL REQUIREMENTS" AND "VISUAL DESIGN." THIS ESSAY INVITES READERS TO CONSIDER THE IRONY WHEREBY THIS LEGACY HAS PROVIDED THE ARGUMENTS THAT HAVE IN TURN BEEN USED AGAINST THE CONTEMPORARY "NEW TYPOGRAPHY."

DESIGNER: ANNE BURDICK

into account intents, contexts and effects, in an effort to rede-
fine appropriateness within the ambit of cultural pluralism.

The exponents of the new typography have been provoked/
induced to defend their positions within the framework of a
problematic dualism: responding to criticism by means of
counter-claims, justifications and derision. Their strategies of
subversion are not as radical as they claim to be, for they
locate substitutions within an existing order without challeng-
ing that order. They neglect, in the process, the more urgent
and difficult task of identifying, then importing into typogra-
phy, the body of theories that could help us explore new
grounds and redefine the relations between language-speech-
writing-typography-reading and interpretation.

One chief aim of this discussion is to argue for theory as a
means for providing new perspectives that allow more diversi-
fied typographic practices, in the hope that theory will no
longer be seen as an expendable adjunct, grafted onto prac-
tice, but as an essential dimension of the design process. **NOT JUST AS A TOOL, BUT AS SYNONYMOUS WITH DESIGN: theory as design**
Moreover, I expect design criticism to be informed by theory if
it is to address the theoretical preoccupations and implica-
tions of specific works, rather than use external appearance as
a pretext for praise or derision.

where does this lead/leave us?
In book design, two significant strategies of disruption express discrete sets of concerns:
strategy one: Elaborated at Cranbrook Academy during the seventies and eighties, it was
applied in the book Cranbrook Design: the new discourse (1990), among others. Katherine
McCoy: "The intention is a conservative book format rooted in classical book design, but with

where next...

We could begin by developing an awareness of the complexity of the problems at hand and collaborate with specialists from those disciplines which can throw light on the relations between typography and language.

By focusing on typographic reference—that is, on the process whereby typography gives a body to a text— FROM WHICH READERS NEGOTIATE THE MEANING/S OF THE TEXT I wish to draw attention to the implications of theory on typographic practice.

By turning to the work of the Russian Formalists and the Linguistic Circle of Prague, more precisely, the semiological aesthetic of Jan Mukarovsky, I hope to make clear that the language and methodologies currently used in our discussions on typography are not adequate to describe typography in all the variety and com-plexity of its functions. The debate on legibility that too frequently conflates typo-graphical issues with questions of optical ergonomics has hindered discussion of the other functions of typography, which have been obscured as well by repeated references to oversimplified notions of (inappropriate self-)expression and aes-thetic (self-)indulgence. However, looking back to Germany in the 1920s and 1930s, we see that a few texts had already begun to theorize typographic commu-nication on a more complex "functional" basis.

"Modernism/s" revisited

In an article titled "Elements of New German Typography" *Penrose Annual* 116 121 published in 1930, Otto Bettmann contrasted *"functional* typography" with *"historical print, which culti-vates traditional forms from an aesthetic point of view."* (p.118)

Bettmann characterized the new functional typography as one ruled by purpose:

Purpose is the leading principle of typographic work in Germany. Only what directly serves to express the meaning and helps to understand the word is acknowledged... every element of typography is to have a function of its own.

For Bettmann and others, this reduction of form to its simplest functional expres-

subtle interventions to break the rules of normalcy. Hopefully, on a quick scan, the pages appear traditional, but when read will reveal subtle aberrations that make the reader conscious of the syntax or grammar of book text." K. McCoy, "Book Format Design Concept," *Emigre 19*, unpaginated

Within this strategy, typographic intervention works on the parameters of a genre—book design—not on the specificity of the text. However, the typographic intervention is

in *Emigre, Visible Language* and *Fellow Readers*

sion implied the suppression of ornament:

> It has to communicate the idea in the most appealing form, not to give an
> optic show with many emblems.

This claim that the new typography was functional is problematic, as it implied
"MODERNIST"
that the old typography was not.

Unable to address classical typography in terms of alternative functionalities, the
exponents of the new typography dismissed it through an act of negation, high-
"REVOLUTIONARY"
lighting the limitations of the "revolution" and "subversion" metaphors. Bettman
seemed to be stating, My functionality against your meaninglessness, while
remaining oblivious to the fact that functionalities are multiple, relative and context-
specific and that the expressive and aesthetic functions theorized by Karl Buhler have an
important, legitimate and unavoidable part to play in typographic communication.

Working from a similar anti-classical position, Tschichold went some way toward
IT MIGHT BE MORE CORRECT TO SAY ANTI-REVIVALIST
breaking the dualism that opposed objective communication to aesthetic indulgence.
In a brief article published in *Circle* in 1937, entitled "New Typography," Tschi-
chold emphasized the importance of the aesthetic function:

> The new typography aims at a clear presentation of the typographical images
> by immaculate technique and by the use of forms which correspond to the new
> feeling for space. (...) We demand also that the resultant form should be beau-
> tiful—thus it would be wrong to designate the new typography as anti-aes-
> thetic. But we consider the use of ornament and rules in the manner of earli-
> er styles as disturbing and contrary to the contemporary spirit. (p. 249)

In this formulation, however, the aesthetic function is presented as providing a
supplement to communication.

Tschichold goes on to establish a causal relation between form and function:

> The form should arise clearly and unequivocally out of the requirements
> of the text and pictures only, and according to the functions of the print-
> ed matter. (p. 249)

generically appropriate (i.e. it is appropriate to the generic content of the text), although it
does not address the specifics of the text. The outcome is a meta-typography, self-conscious
and critically aware of its conventions, which focuses the attention of its (typographically
aware) readers on the effects and implications of typographic expectations, conventions and
transgressions.

Like Bettman—and before him Moholy-Nagy and Bayer—Tschichold emphasized *"simplicity and clarity of means,"* but, unlike Bettman, he was less inclined to separate the formal and the semantic dimension of typography. Towards the end of his essay, he draws our attention to the semiological function of aesthetic factors in typographic communication, linking clarity, contrasts and aesthetic appropriateness:

We seek to achieve clarity by contrasts. Contrasts as such are not necessarily beautiful. There are beautiful contrasts and ugly ones; thus every insertion of bolder types is not good new typography. In general the casual compositor uses everywhere too large and too heavy type; a considerable reduction of sizes of type even makes the reading of the type more agreeable. (p. 250)

In spite of these references, the semiological function of the aesthetic is never fully developed and his observation that *"The formal problem of the new typography is the creation of an asymmetrical balance from contrasting elements,"* (p. 250) could also be read as a formalist statement.

In "New Life in Print," *Commerce Art July 1930* Tschichold identified the *"two aims...in all typographic works"* as the *"recognition and fulfilment of practical requirements—and the visual design. (...) Visual design is a question of aesthetic."*

Tschichold had drawn a distinction between architecture and typography
"THE FORM OF A HOUSE MAY BE DETERMINED BY ITS PRACTICAL PURPOSE." (P. 4) "THE AESTHETIC SIDE IN THE QUESTION OF DESIGN MAKES ITSELF CLEARLY MANIFEST." (P. 4)
to strengthen the connection between typography and fine art, a connection which he characterized as *"not formalist,"* but *"genetic."* (p.7) *"Typography signifies the visual (or aesthetic) ordering of given elements (practical requirements, type, pictures, color, etc.), on a plane surface."* (p.7)

Note that, whereas Tschichold considered art as devoid of practical purpose, in typography he insisted that the aesthetic function operated on, and integrated, formal and practical elements in a unified process of semiosis.

To summarize, we could say that Tschichold and his predecessors acknowledged the semiological function of the aesthetic, but did not theorize its structural role

strategy two: The Telephone Book (University of Nebraska Press, 1989) represents a more ambitious attempt to explore typography in a critical way ("motivè," in the linguistic sense of the term). Here, typography addresses both the content of the text and the reading process. In a short preface, entitled "A User's Manual," the team "author-designer-compositor" Avital Ronell Richard Eckersly - Michael Jensen informs us that the book is "dealing with a logic and topos of the switchboard," and "engages the destabi-

beyond recognizing that it played a part in giving form to a pre-existing message.

At the same time, the term aesthetic continued to be used frequently in typogra-

phy, in opposition to *function*, as in Bayer:

> *my motives for the basic alphabet lie in the realm of func-*
>
> H. Bayer, Visual Communication, Architecture, Painting, New York, Reinhold, 1967, p. 75
>
> *tion rather than of aesthetics.*

Tschichold's remark, five years later, that

> *not only should a typographical job be practical and easy to*
>
> *produce, it should also be a thing of beauty,* (p.3)

confirms that the visual and aesthetic points of view were still conceived of as two

distinct domains whose interaction was perceived as problematic.

the referential and other functions

In an attempt to preserve the myth that typography should be invisible, some crit-

ics of the new typography in the eighties and nineties have played communication

against the aesthetic and expressive functions, which they construe as potential

noise factors, external and detrimental to the "message." In so doing, they have

neglected to consider the point made by El Lissitzky, in 1925:

"Where new areas are opened up to thought—and speech—patterns, there you find new typographical designs originating organically."

The dualistic thinking that has led writers to privilege legibility over the aesthetic

has rendered the aesthetic and the expressive functions as irrelevant, external,

subsidiary and potentially disruptive—but in certain instances, under proper con-

trol, capable of making useful contributions to communication, as an (un)obtrusive

supplement.

In terms of the contemporary debate around legibility, acknowledging how the aes-

thetic, the expressive and the referential functions contribute to communication is

important if we are to account for the complexity of (typo)graphic communication.

"Reference" can be understood as the two-level process whereby typography rep-

resents language. When sound elements are transposed into equivalent graphic

SPEECH   WRITING

lization of the addressee."

It continues: "Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to learn to read with your ears.
In addition to listening for the telephone, you are being asked to tune your ears to noise fre-
quencies, to anticoding, to the inflated reserves of random indeterminateness—in a word, you
are expected to stay open to the static and interference that will occupy these lines. We have

forms, the relationship between typography and language may be described as a

first level of denotation. From this perspective, the view that typography should be

WHERE, FOR INSTANCE, TRADE GOTHIC REPRESENTS CERTAIN LETTERS OF THE ALPHABET WHICH, IN TURN, REPRESENT THE WORDS OF

invisible could be rewritten as the affirmation that the role of typography is essen-

THIS TEXT

tially one of denotation.

But once this first level of denotation is achieved, typography can continue its

work by representing language at the level of the text, translating the typed or

manuscript notation of the author into a form that not only facilitates the deci-

phering of individual characters and their recognition as words, sentences, etc.,

but, through specific choices and combinations of typeface, graphic layout and

other conventions, invites readers to approach and delve into the text from (a)

particular perspective/s. Here, the relation between typography and language

could be described as producing a second order of denotation. Whereas the first

level of denotation deals with questions of optical ergonomics, the second level of

REPRESENTATION OF LETTERS/WORDS/SENTENCES/PARAGRAPHS, ETC.

denotation concerns the possible meanings and interpretation/s of the TEXT.

ITS SEMANTIC DIMENSION

David W. Seaman, "The Development of Visual Poetry in France," *Visible Language* vol VI, no 1, Winter 1972·19-44

The history of typography is rich in attempts at exploring this second level of deno-

tation. However, typographic writings have been chiefly concerned with discus-

sions of text and reading as object and process for optical character recognition

rather than as object and process of interpretation.

It is significant that this second order of denotation has been explored primarily

WHICH ADDRESSES THE TEXT AT THE LEVEL OF ITS CONTENT AND ITS POSSIBLE INTERPRETATIONS

by authors who, dissatisfied with standardized forms of text setting, evolved alter-

native formats and conventions.

Recent critiques of visible typographies have suggested that the designer places

him/herself between the author and the reader, obscuring the meaning of the

BETWEEN THE TEXT AND THE READER

work, thus interfering with the communication process. This may be true in some

cases; however, it should be recognized that the typographic appropriateness

invoked in these discussions is an authorial matter. When authors do not explore

the typographic possibilities opened up by their texts, room must be left for

designers to explore these avenues. What I would like to see, in the future, is more

attempted to install a switchboard which, vibrating a continuous current of electricity, also
replicates the effects of scrambling. At first you may find the way the book runs to be dis-
turbing, but we had to break up its logic typographically. Like the electronic impulse, it is
flooded with signals. To crack open the closural sovereignty of the Book, we have feigned
silence and disconnection, suspending the tranquil cadencing of paragraphs and conventional

collaborations between authors and designers, to enrich the reading process by a
BETWEEN THE TEXT AND THE READER
recourse to the semantic resources of typography.

There are instances of such collaborations, such as those of <u>The Telephone Book</u>
and <u>Cranbrook Design: the new discourse</u>, but there must also be room for design-
ers' initiatives, even in those cases where the author has not considered the ques-
tion. Such initiatives might even interest authors in the hidden possibilities of
typography to enhance the reading process.

parallels

In the 1930s, Mukarovsky evolved a model of communication which has bearing on
our subject, as it sets out to define communication on a broader and more diversified
REPRESENTATION: THE CAPACITY OF A SIGN TO REFER TO AN EXTERNAL REALITY OR REFERENT
basis. Continuing the work of Karl Buhler, who had identified three major functions in
EXPRESSION· THE CAPACITY OF A SIGN TO EXPRESS SOMETHING ABOUT THE SENDER OF THE MESSAGE
"Poetic Reference" 1936 reprinted n Semiotics of Art Cambr dge MIT 1984 155 163
communication: representation, expression and call, Mukarovsky added the
CALL: THE CAPACITY OF THE SIGN TO AFFECT THE RECEIVER
aesthetic function, that which *"draws our attention towards the sign itself."* He noted:

> *Poetic reference is primarily determined, then, not by its relationship to*
>
> *the reality indicated, but by the way it is set into the verbal context.*

For Mukarovsky, that which distinguishes poetry from *"informational language"* is
not only the addition of a new function—the aesthetic function—but a *"reversal
in the hierarchy of relations"* between functions.

Mukarovsky concluded:

> *The first three functions, thus make language enter into connections of a*
> REPRESENTATION, EXPRESSION, CALL
> *practical order; the fourth detaches language from such connections. Or*
>
> *to put it another way: the first three functions belong to the set of prac-*
>
> *tical functions; the fourth is the aesthetic function.* (p.156)

Reprinted in Semiotics of Art, Cambr dge, MIT 1984 142
In "The Meaning of Aesthetic" (1942) Mukarovsky admitted that the aesthetic function
was not solely an attribute of "aesthetic" discourse, but that

> *no human action or things lie beyond the reach of the aesthetic function,*
>
> *even when these actions or objects serve other functions.*

divisions. At indicated times, schizophrenia lights up, jamming the switchboard, fracturing a
latent semantics with multiple calls."
The whole page warrants close examination, as it offers a cogent rationale for typographic
intervention at the level of the text. Being more complex than most texts we have to deal with
in day-to-day practice, <u>The Telephone Book</u> clearly provides more opportunities for a radical

The formalist conclusions reached by Mukarovsky are not the relevant issue here.
It is the conceptualization of communication in terms of an interaction between
language and external realities and the recognition that the aesthetic function
operates in all areas of human endeavor that is important.

THIS WORK WAS FURTHER EXTENDED BY ROMAN JAKOBSON, WHO OUTLINED A MODEL OF COMMUNICATION
BASED ON SIX FUNCTIONS OF LANGUAGE. (R JAKOBSON, "LINGUISTICS AND POETICS," REPRINTED IN
PROBLEMS OF GENERAL LINGLISTICS)

typography as voice

Against the background of recent polemics, the theoretical legacy of the twenties

activated by the publication of Rick Poynor's Typography Now and Steven Heller's "The Cult of the Ugly"

and thirties opens up a number of useful perspectives.

The recent debate has brought about a recognition that typographic diversity is a
necessary consequence of the multiplicity of voices that aspire to be heard. In

see Keedy in Emigre 30

addition, designers have begun to see expression as an important aspect of com-
munication, against the intimation that typography should be purely "denotative,"
and as such unobtrusive.

THAT IT SHOULD BE INVISIBLE!

By focusing on external appearances apprehended through a grid of functionalist
expectations, the critics of the new typography have confined their critique. They
have failed to address the issues behind the new typography, not only as they are
embodied in the works themselves, but as hinted at by the very limitations and
inadequacies of the works' formal and semantic structures.

Recent experiments have opened up a range of as yet unfulfilled possibilities, by
challenging dogmas in the name of the rights of the individual, in full awareness
of social, economic, political and cultural segmentation, hybridization, conflicting
group interests and with the addition of a healthy dose of hedonism.

It is at this point that theory can help us focus on our discipline and
identify new possibilities within typographic practice,

beyond the dualisms that place old and new, modern and postmodern in opposition.
I shall end with a call for research in graphic design, to map out multidisciplinary
ground and to develop deeper links between typographic studies and those disci-
plines that have a bearing on the relations between language and its graphic man-
ifestations. This could take the form of a working seminar in which participants

typographic interpretation of the text.

For a discussion of Bruce Mau's participation in the process of authorship, see Eye, vol. 4, Winter 1994-44-53

Because it addresses the content of the text typographically, the design of The Telephone
Book called for a closer collaboration between author, designer and compositor, with the
designer participating in the process of authorship. While the typography may not be
perfect—it still poses problems, as does the text, as a reviewer of the text pointed out—

share experiences, assess the current state of research, identify prospective
research viewpoints and methodologies and devise concrete projects. This inves-
tigation will attempt to enrich typography with concepts and methods presently
scattered across different fields that are relevant to its theorizing and its practice.

It is important that we develop writing strategies that open multiple perspectives,
beyond anthologies and collections. We need to exchange views and collaborate
on projects rather than unfold unilinear arguments. Inspired by a more generous
MONOLOGUES
desire to understand the other—even/especially if provoked by his or her posi-
tion—this approach would delay the process of judging in a peremptory manner,
favoring the decentering of dialogic modes, through a plural writing of differing
voices.

The form of the "polylogue" adopted by Derrida in Cinders, the textual strategies
found in "Tympan," Glas, Derridabase/Circumfession and their semiological impli-
cations, the theorizing of the "figural" by Lyotard in Discours, figures, Irigaray's
attention to the gendered basis of language and numerous other texts could, if
closely studied, open perspectives for theorizing typography on the extended basis
of more complex and newly recognized functionalities.

"polylogue"   University of Nebraska Press, 1991   textual strategies

Margins of Ph..osophy. University of Chicago Press, 1982   Univers ty of Nebraska Press, 1982   semiological implications

theorizing of the "figural"   Klincksieck, 1971

J aime à toi, Par s: B Grasset, 1992
the gendered basis of language

numerous other texts

it represents a significant move beyond styling.

the cyclic history of the line

brian schorn

andrew slatter · smletherland

-tions. he sees the

history of this essay in orbit around a certain word

he sees potential *The word is* potential *The word is* metathesis. *meaning "the transposition of letters or phonemes within a word."*

Then, at 1:23pm on December 9th, 1989, the transposition takes place| *The historical orbit around* metathesis *becomes profuse, quickly (dis)integrating* metathesis *into black space, but in the process redeeming the* lien, *which has been affected by a smaller orbit around the letters* e *and* n. *The orbit is in retrograde* |and *is magnetically charged. It pulls the* e *and* n *up into its orbit, with unimaginable grace. Halfway through the revolution,*

the letters reach Point **Z** *and stop. Here, at the sight of the final shift, the dancer is reborn and the transposition is complete: The* n *of the fourth character position is now in the third, and the* e *of the third character position is now in the fourth, thus creating an*

invention of enormous potential, the line, dancing back to Point **A** *back to Michigan,* where this essay begins in 1961 on the forty-fifth parallel of the Northern Hemisphere

The line *begins in 1965.* Point *the beginning point is the point at which a pile of wooden blocks appear. Each block in the pile has been assigned one of the twenty-six letters of the English alphabet. Individually, the blocks are looked upon as beautiful objects, as simple yet infinitely*

blossoms of an apple tree in the back yard of a new *potential*

subdivision somewhere in Michigan. *The blocks are not only aesthetic, but functional, they move, and, in fact, they are possessed to move, so they do,*

AFTER several years, there are four distinct points *but with certain difficulty. This movement continues on a regular basis, in other words, practice*

of complexity, like four centers of metropolis connected by a single

and not necessarily straight, length of highway. These—

points are intermediate points, for example

B *thru*

E *In 1969, when all four metropolitan centers have been established,*

F *is introduced, as another language, as Paris. Here,* word *becomes* mot *and* book *becomes* livre

G *thru*

L

THE blocks begin to shift with a sensitive regularity|

complete thoughts, sentences, shifting their residence from

Michigan to Paris to Michigan. Down below, over the

Atlantic, a line is learning to swim. Throughout a

ten year period, it comes in contact with six islands, for example *Gibru*

On each of these islands, practice becomes pleasurable|

becomes the physical awakening of the line, as well as the|

guts of the line. There is the beginning of a process| *Consumption, digestion, excretion, and reproduction*

AFTER 1979, in the middle of the process, which takes place on island **(L)** the last island of the line certain metamorphoses occur *For example, when one sees the word line, one will see the word ligne, simply by seeing Paris, and thereby inserting a g in between the i and n.*

The process of practice allows for this without question, in fact, with *pleasure*

What remains in question is distance *and that is answered by the Shift Effect, by letting* **(M)** *equal Michigan,* **(N)** and **(O)**

(P) *equal Paris. This will be considered the first of four subsequent shifts*

equal the distance in between, and

IN support of the first shift, one might approach the English word 'ligneous *and the French word* ligneaux *Only upon discovering their mutual origin in the pith of woody plants, will one see the process begin to reproduce itself with any sort of permanence.*

The woody stem (pencil) and woody pulp (paper) will become the materials of the process of the line Michigan (ligneous) and Paris (ligneaux) will both provide suitable environments for the manufacture of these materials.

LOOKING much closer, one will see the designated concurrence of insect development and line development For example, the life of a Monarch butterfly and the life of a line [*There are four distinct stages: 1) egg, 2) larva, 3) pupa, and 4) adult*

In this case, the egg will live in Michigan and the adult will live in Paris The transitional stages of larva and pupa will exist in flux, the larva in pencils the pupa in paper, and vice versa

CORRESPONDING to the four stages of metamorphosis are four adult Monarch butterflies labelled **(Q) (R) (S)** and **(T)**

In addition to the labelled Monarchs, there are four identically labelled birch trees Since the Monarchs are in Paris and the trees are in Michigan, the Monarchs, being of a volatile nature, will proceed to descend upon the trees in the yard of a Detroit suburb. The Q butterfly will cling to the Q tree, the R butterfly will cling to the R tree, and so on, Then, on May 14, 1983, when the T butterfly finally clings itself to the T tree, *the doctrine of the metamorphosis is realized [Fragments (words) will harmonize to form the perpetual endlessness of the whole (line).*

writer

designer · designer

THE second shift begins in the gross human anatomy lab at the University of Michigan's Medical School. Six years of prep work have been done: The four birch trees and their corresponding butterflies have been transplanted at each corner of the dissection table. They are in deep thought, in harmony. Their existence, or thoughts, are absolutely essential for the line on the table to be the ligament on the table, to be horizontal. Simply put, *ligne* no longer exists Here, it is the ligament that is alive, alive in the flexible spine of a young dancer at center stage, dancing horizontally on the sheets of the dissection table. The spine is horizontal *therefore, the line is horizontal. An overhead spot lamp is directed at Point* **Ⓤ** *or the atlas, the first cervical vertebra of the spine. This is no arbitrary beginning point, it is the first word of the line, it is the atlas, lying nearest to the lower cortex of the cerebrum. In place of the thirty-three vertebral bones of the spine, one will see words, meaning thirty-three words will make up this line. The specific name for this line is of Latin origin, namely, ligamenta flava, meaning "the golden-colored bandage." Without this ligament the line will stumble, will not dance.*

The ligamenta flava must hold the line erect, and it does Each vertebra, or word, is caught up in the sinuous-fibrous web of the line, occurring as early as 450,000 years B.C. in *Pithecanthropus erectus*, the first human line Without this web, as stated by Paul Klee in his *Pedagogical Sketchbook* "One bone alone achieves nothing."

NONE of this will be understood though, unless one approaches center stage, and one must come willingly bearing scalpel and rubber gloves *Upon completing the incision at Point* **Ⓥ** *the sacrum, one will see a shimmering band of fibro-elastic tissue, a ligament, alive.*

The words will be woven to a point of perfection only the dancer and the scalpel will know. But the weight of the woven words end at the sacrum, not the coccyx, the last word of the spine

This permits the coccyx to become point **Ⓦ** *Such abruptness can be seen as a ligamental tear, as a line break.*

THE third shift will begin gradually, shifting over September October, and November of 1989, allowing only one American to enter Paris. He will enter at Point **X** a point of voluntary obscurity. He will look at the history of this essay and retrieve the wooden blocks, the metropolis the islands, the woody stems and pulp the butterflies and birch trees, and, above all, the **ligament.**

He will look at these in two ways *1) analytically, as discovery; and 2) synthetically, as invention.*

In the process of his work, he will discover something unknown, even uncomprehensible *between the lines of this essay. What is not here is what he will find: A book of infinite potential, a book by Raymond Queneau entitled* Cent Mille Milliards de poémes. *The American will never read the book in its entirety, not because of disinterest, but because of physical stamina, because the Earth revolves around the sun, and his conception of this, even after his death, is inevitable.*

THE discovery of this book will generate a realization similar to the event of the T butterfly clinging to the T tree *that being potential,* or Point **Y** *For example, he will understand the formal constraints of the history of this essay and rejoice.*

His rejoice will take place in a silent workroom containing these four articles *Marcel Benabou's* Table of Elementary Linguistic and Literary Operations, *the Michigan-born* ligament, *the Paris-born* lien, *and a French-English/English-French dictionary.*

His understanding of abstract mathematics is not necessary but will be helpful. For nearly two weeks he works toward *the potential of an invention.* He is uncertain, if not frightened, of the reason for the introduction of the foreign element **lien,** so he decides to be safe and direct his experiments elsewhere

INSTEAD, he systematically applies all of Benabou's operations to the limp, putrified ligament Out of some suspicion, he is not surprised to find that the results prove to be unsatisfactory and useless, in fact *potential-less.* The unsuccessful operations on the ligament force him to confront *the mystery of the* lien. This time he will begin with the dictionary He will look up *lien finding potential, finding the rotten ligament, in other words the unification of Michigan and Paris.* But this is not enough *not invention.*

So he decides to go back to Benabou's operations *applying each one to the potential invention of the* lien.

ON page ninety-nine of **Table of Elementary Linguistic and Literary Opera-**

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